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MAGAZINE

March 1998 \$2.50

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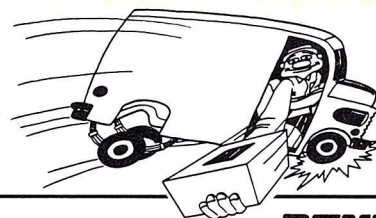
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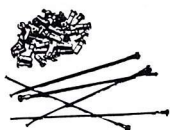
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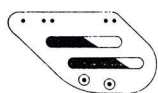
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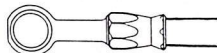


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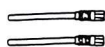
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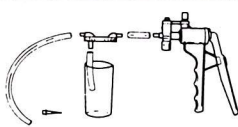


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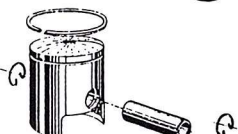


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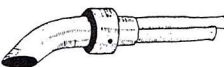
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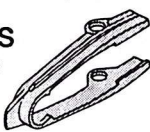


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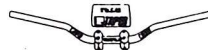
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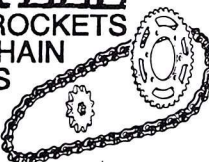
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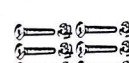


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**On the cover:** Trail Rider's West Coast perpetual photo model Jimmy Lewis tweaks the Yamaha WR400 at a secret test session somewhere near Area 51 in Nevada. Jimmy works for Cycle World, a grand old magazine with a benevolent editor who doesn't mind when we use Jimmy in photos...we hope. Photo by the Bossman.

**March 1998**  
**Volume 28 Number 3**

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www.trailrider.com  
**E-Mail Address**  
trmagazine@prodigy.net

Printed in the USA by  
GraphicData, Burlington, NJ

The advertising deadline  
for the June 1998 issue  
is April 15, 1998

## MACHINES

- 10 Yamaha WR400F**  
*First ride on the new thumper*
- 28 Yamaha YZ250**  
*An Eastern woods motocrosser*
- 36 TM 250**  
*Charlie's take on the Italian Stallion*

## COMPETITION

- 16 Belltown Scrambles**  
*Finishing up the season*
- 22 Vegas to Reno**  
*Bernardo and Smith win*

## FEATURES

- 20 How to Attack the Tight**  
*Quick tips on tight trees*
- 26 How to Keep Your Goggles On**  
*Keeping your orbs covered*
- 32 Product Shorts**  
*Cycra Handguards, SRC Vital Drink System*

## TECHNICAL

- 34 TR Toolbox**  
*Plug stuff*

## DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Last Over**  
*The Power of Mud*
- 6 The Rest of the World**
- 8 Eastern News**
- 44 Yankee Trader**
- 46 Hertfelder**  
*Results S.A.P.*



**Warning: there isn't anything that will top the feeling you get from piloting a motorcycle through the woods, but you have to accept the risks inherent in this sport if you're going to do it. There are no safety features expressed or implied, there are no airbags or seat belts to protect you from yourself. The entire burden of personal safety rests right on your shoulders, Bucko, and if you mess up it's not the land owner's fault, not the bike manufacturer's fault, and certainly not our fault. We recommend using all the protective clothing you can, and be aware of what you're doing at all times. And then, it's fun.**

## Significant Knowledge:

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**Contributors:** We pay \$30 a page for copy, and \$8 each for black and white photos, but we don't print just anything that comes in. Call us and we'll talk about it.

**Yankee Trader:** Subscribers can advertise their bikes for sale free in Yankee Trader. Just write it down and mail it in, don't call us with it. Thanks!

**Trail Rider Magazine** (ISSN 0892-3922) is published monthly at 127 Navajo Trail, Medford Lakes NJ 08055. Subscriptions are available from Trail Rider Magazine, P.O. Box 2038, Medford Lakes NJ 08055, at \$18.00 U.S. per 12 issues (one year). Canadian subscriptions are \$25 U.S. yearly. Copyright © 1998 by Trail Rider Magazine. All rights reserved. No advertising or editorial matter in this magazine may be reproduced for distribution without written permission by the publisher. Contributors: Articles and event photos are welcome, although we assume no responsibility for unsolicited materials. Unless special arrangements are made in advance, all published materials become the sole property of Trail Rider. Periodicals postage paid at Medford, New Jersey, and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Trail Rider Magazine, P.O. Box 2038, Medford Lakes NJ 08055-2038.**



# LAST OVER

by Paul Clipper

## The Power of Mud

**G**lorious mud. This is the season for it. Mud on your feet, mud on your bike, wrapped around your tires; mud for walking, mud for riding, mud from thawing, mud from rain, mud for the little boy who lives down the lane.

Do you like mud?

I have a co-worker here, whose name I'll keep secret to not embarrass him, who lives for it. He thinks there's nothing better than to find an old game trail through a swamp and then ride a bunch of people into it, sticking them all thoroughly.

He has some unresolved issues with mud from his childhood, the analyst would say.

Down here, in the wilds of suburban New Jersey, mud is an odd sort of thing. You can't really predict it. The southern half of New Jersey is nothing much more than a sand bar between Pennsylvania and the ocean (both culturally and geologically some would say), so when you're riding here you have to think "seashore." You know how beaches seem so uniform, that there's nothing there for miles except sand? Well, if you live on the ocean and walk the beach every day you know that that's far from reality. Actually, the beach is composed of sand and silt—at least around here; up north they have rocks mixed in—and when a storm beats it all up a beach can show it's true character, with scabs of clay-like silt exposed after all the waves go down.

It's like that deep in the woods, too. Well, I don't mean the waves stir up the sand. We start getting waves in the Pines and we'll have more to worry about than the riding. What I mean is that the "endless" sand of the Pines gives way occasionally to silt beds and marl pits, and you can break through the sand layer occasionally into some truly horrible goo, especially in the spring. The freeze-thaw cycle—assuming that the woods ever froze this year, which, from the perspective of 70-degree days in January seems rather unlikely—stirs up the Pinelands soil almost as effectively as a beach storm. When the ice crystals push all those little molecules of sand and silt apart, places in the woods can turn into quicksand pits.

And that's when Mark likes it the best.

Oops. I wasn't going to give his name, wasn't I? Silly me.

The same thing happens in New England, only bigger. Up there, you get a serious freeze every year, at one point or the other, and usually to some significant depth in the soil. The dirt up there is a mix of glacial rock dust and rotted bits of vegetation, and when it freezes good and deep wonderful

things happen in the ground. The ice expands everything, shoves out a ton of room for itself, and then when it all thaws all the little bits of dirt are just floating in a surface layer of water. Where it's interesting and sloppy to ride down here, up in New England it's really impossible.

I remember last spring, jonesing to get back into the woods, and riding the trails dodging snow drifts and fighting frozen ground with bare tires. It was fun, but it would have been better with studs, but it was too late in the season to put studs on. So I wallowed in the snow, then came back and parked it.



During that week it really thawed, finally, and showed signs of once again getting warm for a season. I went out again on Saturday, and couldn't believe what I found in the woods. It was wet, and places I'd always known to be solid rock now felt somewhat soft. The places that always seem to have puddles had really big puddles. And I found out quickly that the places that used to be nice riding dirt were now bottomless pits.

I found this out quickly, because for some reason or the other I went out this time on my mountain bike. You can get through a lot of difficult spots in the woods with a motorcycle through sheer exploitation of horsepower. Even aging old ex-racer slugs like myself have managed to pick up a few skills along the way, and on a good bike we really do skip along without leaving much of a footprint on the ground. (The young, faster guys do the same thing, only much quicker.)

With a mountain bike under you, things are way different. Even if you're NORBA national caliber, you still are going too slowly to keep from putting some serious weight on those skinny tires. (A Charlie Williams-esque aside: Do you see what I mean, what I'm trying to say here? Motorcycles equal faster motive force and wider tires, with less pounds per square inch down force in a given situation. Mountain bike equals skinny tires and slow speeds, with a much higher apparent down force per square inch. Got it?) The first part of my trail was the rockiest, and on the

mountain bike it felt alarmingly soft. Rivers of water were running from the snow drifts, but at the edges of the drifts it was all right—still very hard and frozen. When I got to a little down hill piece of trail that I recall as being nice dirt, well, I had my first revelation.

It isn't even much of a hill, just a turn to the right and about 30 feet of descent before the trail started climbing the first hill into the woods. The top was wet and sloppy, because of a year-round puddle that was currently overflowing with meltwater, but the start of the trail was okay. At least it felt okay, but maybe a little soft. Rolling down the hill it kept getting softer and softer, and at the bottom, where it used to be rocky and packed hard, it had turned into liquid dirt. My front wheel should have hit the bottom of the draw and rolled out, instead it hit the bottom and kept going, straight into the earth, just like the guy being swallowed up in the nut orchard on the X-Files. I went about halfway to the axle, did a lovely little pivot and flopped head first into the slime.

Mud season. It didn't take too much longer to realize that there was no way I was going to ride that day and enjoy it. In the next couple of weeks it got even worse. Even walking out of house, squishing across the yard, the whole world felt like Jello on a tabletop, all wobbly and shaky. Forget about going into the woods, you couldn't even walk back there. It would have been a great time to have a dual sport bike, or even a street bike, because the road was the only place solid. Oh, you can mount up your fattest tires and slop through the trails all right, especially if you don't like your bike (or can borrow someone else's), but the major problem with doing this is the fact that you'll be paying for it the whole rest of the riding season after you completely wreck the trails. It's easy to rut the mud all up, and then when it's all settled back down into its dry-season state you have a bunch of trenches to ride in, instead of trails.

So we wait.

Or we go to Florida, and ride in a different swamp.

In South Jersey—where they recently changed the highway speed limits to 65 mph, thank you—mud season is actually a time when it's fun to ride in the woods. All the water packs the sand down, and you can ride without feeling so much like you're wallowing aimlessly from tree to tree. (Honestly, it's even better in the middle of an icy winter, if you can stand the cold. Frozen sand whoopedos are almost fun to ride, and the trails themselves turn into gritty concrete.) We escape the doldrums of mud season down here with the only fun time to ride in all this sand (and a lot fewer deer ticks), and it's fairly easy to avoid the mud if you watch where you ride. Although I do remember a time that, following Mark, I wound up in water up to my waist, holding up a brand new dual sport bike I'd just registered as it sucked in an airbox-full of dirty brown water.

I guess as much as watching where you ride, you have to watch who you ride with, too! □

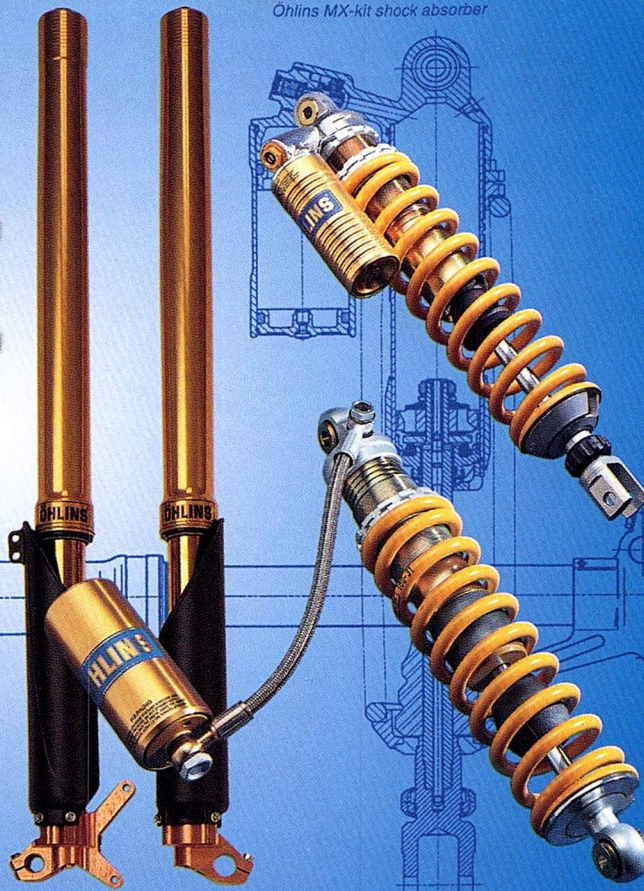


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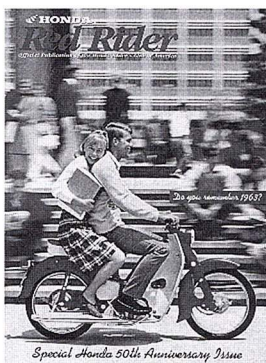


# THE REST of the WORLD

## The Start of it All

Honda sent us the latest issue of Red Rider, the official publication of the Honda Rider's Club of America, and normally something like this would go on the pile along with the rest of the bike mags and Victoria's Secret catalogs that come every day. But this one stopped us cold, or warm, better yet. Reproduced on the cover is one of the original images from Honda's first ad campaign, the monumentally successful "You meet the nicest people on a Honda" campaign. At the time America was a country fairly full of real motorcycles, Harleys, mostly, along with all the British and European iron carted into the country after World War Two. There was virtually no market at all for a small, cheap motorcycle, and especially not from Japan, which was known more for cheap transistor radios than anything else. Then, in 1963, Honda introduced the Super Cub in one of the friendliest, sticky-sweetest ad campaigns in history...and it worked.

We don't have to go into the progression of history since then, but soon the Harley pilots found new, lightweight bikes to ride in enduros. Little, friendly motorcycles started popping up everywhere, much to the distaste of the leather-clad old guard on the street, and in short time there were little red bikes



everywhere. For a short period of time there, folks who didn't know any better even referred to motorcycles generically as "Hondas." Then the woods filled with two-strokes and here we are today. It's been quite a ride.

But look at the image from our innocent beginnings. Check out the smile on that sweetie riding shotgun. She's hooked; she's getting a taste of everything she's ever been warned about, wrapped up in a happy, red, un-threatening package. Look at him, with that grin on his face and that JFK hair-do. He's nabbed himself a major

score, and he knows it. Before the Honda, the only expensive tool he had was a slide

rule and a pocket protector, and now he's the man!

Oh, those were the days. We're so glad Honda took the plunge back in '63.

## Ride Baja

It seems like everybody wants to ride in Baja these days, and it's a good thing, too. This way there's something for all the tour operators to do! Along with the ranks of Baja tour offerings you'll see in the back of this book, we also welcome Larry Roeseler to the touring business. LR is offering four trips to Baja this year, with a variety of packages starting at \$895 for a three-day ride to \$2750 for a full-on eight-day 1100 mile sampling of the whole peninsula. Details on every trip are different, and you can rent motorcycles or bring your own. The best we can recommend is that you get in touch with them for a brochure and more information. You can learn more by logging onto the Internet, or call Tim Clark for an information package at (818)957-1166.

## Desert Tour

Remember the Spring Tour of Nevada. As we reported last month, our old friend Matt Ernst of Nevada Motorcycle Adventures is offering two possible special trips for Trail Rider readers. Option #1 is April 12-17, 1998, riding 80 to 100 miles a day along the Nevada/California border, as high as the snow will let us. The regular price is \$1795 for the tour, but for eight riders or more Matt will charge only \$1495.

Option #2 is June 21-26. Plenty of ghost towns, hot springs, dry lakes, you name it. The cost for this one is \$1695 for eight or more riders. The cost of either tour includes a guide, motorcycle, fuel, support vehicle, five nights lodging (double occupancy), five dinners and breakfasts, six lunches and trail refreshments. Reservations must be received before February 28th, so talk it over with your buddies and call NMA to get hooked up, at (702)359-4380, or e-mail to . We've done it twice before, and had a ball!

## 1998 AMA/Suzuki Dual Sport Trail Ride Series

February 14-15, 1998

Tour n' Trails Promotions  
(818) 890-2209

LOC: Laughlin, NV

April 18-19, 1998

Trail Riders of Houston  
(281) 444-1542

LOC: New Waverly, TX

May 2-3, 1998

Racer Productions  
(304) 284-0084

LOC: Hurricane Mills, TN

May 9-10, 1998

Buckeye Dual Sporters  
(614) 385-3885

LOC: McArthur, OH

May 30-31, 1998

Durty Dabbers  
(717) 726-3343

LOC: Mill Hall, PA

June 6-7, 1998

Midwest Trail Riders Association  
(314) 576-4013

LOC: Lesterville, MO

June 13-14, 1998

Merrimack Valley Trail Riders  
(800) 757-0203

LOC: Loudon, NH

Racer Productions  
(304) 284-0084

LOC: Renfro Valley, KY

July 18-19, 1998

Morgantown, WV 26505-9104

(304) 284-0084

LOC: Davis, WV

July 26-31, 1998

Cycle Conservation Club  
(517) 782-4567

LOC: Newberry, MI

September 12-13, 1998

K-T Riders

(502) 522-6624

LOC: Golden Pond, KY

September 16-19, 1998

Colorado Sportrides

(303) 697-8382

LOC: Steamboat Springs, CO

September 19-20, 1998

Racer Productions

(304) 284-0084

LOC: Elizabeth, WV

September 26-27, 1998

Stoney Lonesome Motorcycle Club

(812) 342-1150

LOC: Columbus, IN

Desert Motorcycle Promotions

(602) 488-6357

LOC: Phoenix, AZ

October 3-4, 1998

Northern Virginia Trail Riders

(540) 547-3317

LOC: Mt. Solon, VA

October 10-11, 1998

Ridge Runners Motorcycle Club

(408) 688-2857

LOC: Angels Camp, CA

October 17-18, 1998

Enduro Riders Association

(937) 256-8365

LOC: McArthur, OH

Tour n' Trails Promotions

(818) 890-2209

LOC: TBA

October 24-25, 1998

Trail Riders of Houston

(281) 376-4726

LOC: Terlingua, TX

November 27-28, 1998

District 37 Dual Sport

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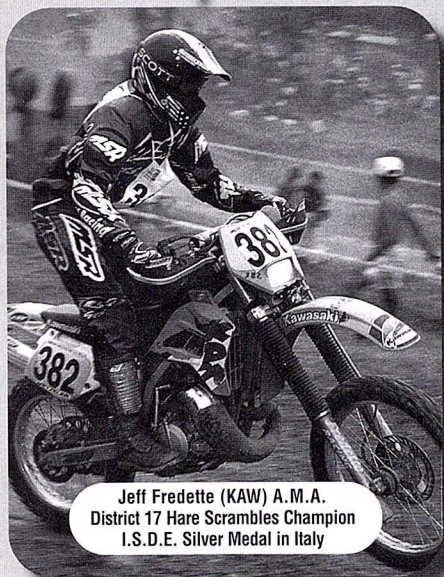
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# NEWS FLASH

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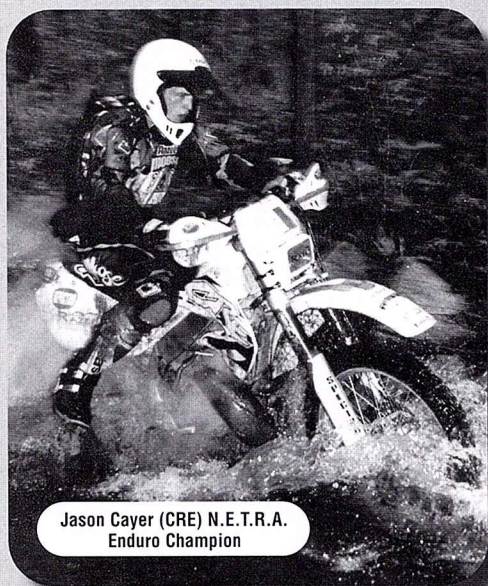
Jeff Fredette (KAW) A.M.A.  
District 17 Hare Scrambles Champion  
I.S.D.E. Silver Medal in Italy



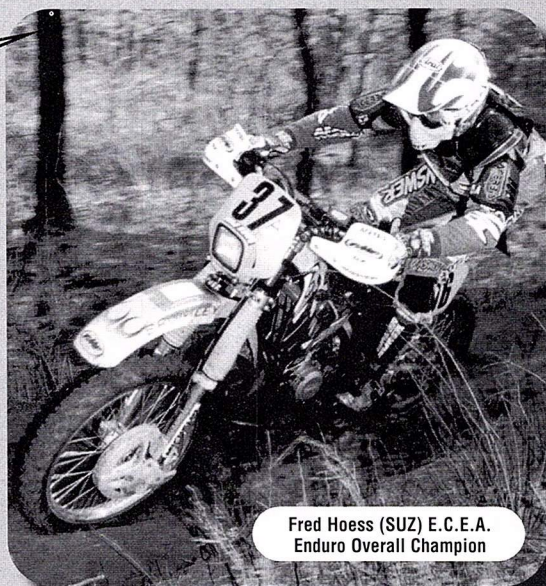
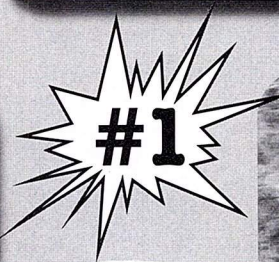
Ty Davis (KAW) A.M.A.  
Hare & Hound Series Champion



Josh McLevy (HON) N.E.T.R.A.  
Hare Scrambles Champion



Jason Cayer (CRE) N.E.T.R.A.  
Enduro Champion



Fred Hoess (SUZ) E.C.E.A.  
Enduro Overall Champion

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\* Source: 1996 and 1997 Dirt Rider Bind-in Survey (brand of two-stroke oil purchased most often)



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# EASTERN NEWS

## Back Again

First on the list this month is the note from the happy Brandywine Enduro Riders, who are bringing back their Brandywine Enduro this year on July 26. It will be held in Crossforks, PA, which is in Potter County. The Brandywine Enduro will be part of the ECEA and District 4 series this year, and they promise all sorts of new trail and the best mix of terrain they've ever found. BER says it's going to be an enduro to satisfy everyone. Look for information from all your regular ECEA sources, and check the BER Web site on the Internet, at .

## Many Thanks

The Central Cycle Club of the Central Village, CT, area sponsors the Pachaug Rock Ride turkey run each year, and it's a great little ride. Last year, the donated all of the proceeds from their ride to the NETRA legal defense fund, which was something in excess of \$2000! Talk about a great club! They deserve a slap on the back and an "attaboy" from everyone in New England!



For the second year in a row, Lyle Lovett was not at the NETRA banquet. Instead, he was riding in Baja with Bernardo, and Jerry sent this photo.

## NETRA Weekend a Success

The annual NETRA Awards Banquet was just last weekend, and we can report that everybody got through the long Saturday maybe a little tired, but there were no injuries. Actually, we had a grand old time, with all the usual product displays, tons of people attending, and a lot of good cheer.

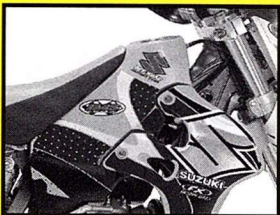
# WOODS WARFARE!

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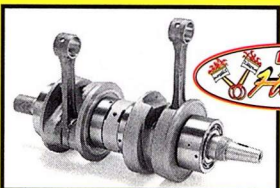
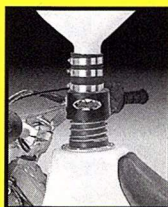
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Just the way you want to spend a rainy weekend in Springfield. Look for a full report and photos in next month's TR.

## First Scrambles

NETRA's Clarkie's Wild Ride hare scrambles kicked off the NETRA season last weekend, and Tommy Norton was the guy who picked up the overall, just like the old days. Norton was riding his new Yamaha YZ125, and took the overall by six minutes. Kenny Valentine from New York took second overall on his KTM. Interesting to note that the combined age of the two top finishers at Clarkie's was over 70 years, much to the consternation of young Pat Timothy, who finished third overall on his Kawasaki, and was heard to remark "I can't believe I was beaten by a couple of old men." Norton plans to win the NETRA hare scrambles series again this year, and it looks like he's off to a good start. April will see the second race, Lembo Lake, and we'll see what happens then.

## Eastern Boys

Same date as the first NETRA event was the first AMA National Hare Scrambles in Hollister, California. It isn't eastern, we know, but a number of our familiar faces were there, getting tuned up for the season to come. Local boy Mike Lafferty was there, and word has it he spent a large part of the beginning of the race leading the pack, only to slide back down the standings as the mud took its toll. The race was held in epic monsoon conditions, from what we heard, and it was difficult to see your hand in front of your face it was raining so hard. Josh McLevy was also there, and he finished the event fifth overall, right behind Lafferty. ISDE rider Brian Garrahan won the overall, with GNCC regular Doug Blackwell finishing second, while Brian's brother Pat finished third overall. Also of note, NETRA rider "Low-End" Luke McNeil drove out with Charlie McLevy, Josh's father, and rode to a 18th overall finish, winning the 125cc Expert class easily. Everybody's getting tuned up for Florida; there's going to be some killer racing down there! ☐

## 1998 ECEA Series

3/15 Sandy Lane Enduro, Greenbank, NJ  
3/29 Greenbrier National Enduro, Belleplain, NJ  
4/5 Stumpjumper Enduro, Warren Grove, NJ  
4/19 Reading National H. S., New Phila, PA  
4/26 ECEA Hare Scrambles, Delaware  
5/3 Pine Hill Enduro, New Lisbon, NJ  
5/10 ECEA Hare Scrambles, PBER, South Jersey  
5/17 Curly Fern Enduro, Indian Mills, NJ  
5/24 Broad Mountain Enduro, New Phila., PA  
5/31 ECEA Tri-Co Hare Scrambles, South Jersey  
6/7 11/22 ECEA/GNCC H. S., Manahawick, NJ  
6/14 Ridge Run Enduro, Stanhope, NJ  
6/21 VFTR Hare Scrambles, Eastern PA  
6/21 Tri-Co Dual Sport, South Jersey  
6/28 Southern Tier Enduro, Eastern NY  
7/12 Little Rhody Nat. Enduro, W. Greenwich, RI

7/19 Foggy Mountain Enduro, Blain, PA  
7/26 BER Enduro, Crossforks, PA  
8/9 Canyon Enduro, Middlebury Center, PA  
8/16 Speedville Enduro, Speedsville, NY  
8/23 ECEA Hare Scrambles, Stanhope, NJ  
8/30 Beehive Enduro, Mauricetown, NJ  
9/13 Michaux Enduro, Shippensburg, PA  
9/20 Moonshine Enduro, Brandonville, PA  
9/27 Scrub Pine Enduro, New Lisbon, NJ  
10/4 Pine Barons Enduro, Chatsworth, NJ  
10/11 SJER Dual Sport, Indian Mills, NJ  
10/11 ECEA Hare Scrambles, Whiteford, MD  
10/18 RORR Dual Sport, New Philadelphia, PA  
10/18 ECEA Hare Scrambles, Lummis Mill, NJ  
10/25 Delaware State Enduro, Del. City, DE  
11/8 MCI Hare Scrambles, Warren Grove, NJ  
11/1 Green Marble Enduro, Whiteford, MD  
11/15 Meteor Dual Sport, South Jersey

## 1998 NETRA Series

1/31 Clarkie's Wild Ride Jr. Enduro, Freetown, MA  
2/1 Clarkie's Wild Ride H.S., Freetown, MA  
2/8 Snow Run Enduro, Stafford CT  
4/26 Lembo Lake Hare Scrambles, Modena, NY  
4/25 William Phelan Mem. Junior Enduro, Brimfield MA  
4/25 Nervous Novice Parent/Child Ride, Brimfield MA  
5/3 Hoot Owl Hare Scrambles, Uxbridge, MA  
5/16 Nervous Novice Parent/Child Ride, Fishouse, NY  
5/16 CATRA Junior Enduro, Fishouse NY  
5/17 CATRA Hare Scrambles, Fishouse NY  
5/17 Gnarly Dude Turkey Run, West Greenwich RI  
5/31 John Monahan Enduro, Freetown MA  
6/7 King Philip Enduro, Wrentham MA  
6/13 NETRA Enduro School, Brimfield, MA  
6/14 New Eng. Championship Enduro, Somers CT  
6/13-14 New Hampshire Classic T.R., Loudon NH  
6/20 Dam Good Junior Enduro, Thomaston CT  
6/20 Nervous Novice Ride, Thomaston, CT  
6/21 Dam Good Hare Scrambles, Thomaston CT  
6/27 Firecracker Junior Enduro, Union CT  
6/27 Nervous Novice Parent/Child Ride, Union CT  
6/28 Conn. State Hare Scrambles, Union CT  
7/1 Central Vermont Hare Scrambles, Chelsea, VT  
7/4 Berkshire Jr. Enduro, Granville MA  
7/4 Nervous Novice Parent/Child ride, Granville, MA  
7/12 Little Rhody National Enduro, W. Greenwich RI  
7/12 Greylock Hare Scrambles, Windsor MA  
7/14 Tri-State Enduro, Oxford MA  
7/25 Knox Junior Enduro, Southampton MA  
7/25 Nervous Novice Parent/Child ride, Southampton MA  
7/26 Belltown Scrambles, East Hampton CT

8/2 Slippery Root Hare Scrambles, W. Unity, NH  
8/9 Berkshire Mudslinger Enduro, Granville, MA  
8/16 Kayaderosseras Kaper T.R., Lake Desolation, NY  
8/22 Nervous Novice Parent/Child Ride, Union CT  
8/22 Salmon Run Junior Enduro, Union CT  
8/23 Salmon Run Hare Scrambles, Union CT  
8/24 Rocky Mtn. Jr. Enduro, Alton NH  
8/30 Rocky Mtn Hare Scrambles, Alton, NH  
9/6 Hoot Owl II Hare Scrambles, Uxbridge MA  
9/13 Ammonoosuc River Turkey Run, North Haverhill NH  
9/13 Greylock Enduro, Lee MA  
9/13 Steelhead Hare Scrambles, Boyntonville NY  
9/20 Triple B III Turkey Run, New Boston MA  
9/20 Woodsocross Hare Scrambles, West Greenwich RI  
9/26 Nervous Novice Parent/Child Ride, Brimfield MA  
9/26 Steeple Rock Junior Enduro, Brimfield MA  
9/27 2000 Fall Turkey Run, Wrentham MA  
10/4 Mohawk Enduro, Adams MA  
10/10 Clarkie's Wild Ride Junior Enduro, Assonet MA  
10/10 Nervous Novice Parent Child ride, Assonet MA  
10/11 Clarkie's Wild Ride II H.S., Assonet MA  
10/11 Tri State Turkey Run, Winchendon MA  
10/18 Cockaponset Enduro, Chester CT  
10/18 Halloween Fun Run Charity Ride, Freetown MA  
10/25 Pachaug Rock Ride Turkey Run, Central Village CT  
11/7 Jack Frost Junior Enduro, Winchendon MA  
11/7 Nervous Novice Parent/Child Ride, Winchendon MA  
11/1 Black & Blue Enduro, Stafford CT  
11/15 Broken Peg Enduro, Central Village CT  
12/6 Toys for Tots Charity Ride, T.B.A.

## NAMES AND ADDRESSES

<b>New England Trail Rider Association (NETRA)</b> P.O. Box 478 Ellington, CT 06029 (860)875-5757	<b>AMA</b> P.O. Box 6114 Westerville, OH 43081 (614)891-2425
<b>East Coast Enduro Association (ECEA)</b> RD 4, Box 5671 Jonestown, PA 17038 (717)865-0601	<b>New York Trail Rider Alliance, NYTRA</b>
<b>Vermont Trail Riders Asc. (VETRA)</b> P.O. Box 136 South Pomfret, VT 05067	<b>New England-New York Coalition, NENYC</b> 8 Komar Drive Charlton, NY 12019
<b>Pennsylvania Trail Riders Association (PATRA)</b> Box 77 Thomasville, PA 17364	<b>New Jersey Trails Conservancy (NJTC)</b> 1799 Route 38 Mt. Holly, NJ 08060
<b>Racer Productions (AMA GNCC Series)</b> Route 7, Box 459 Morgantown, WV 26505 (304)284-0084	<b>District 6 Sports Asc.</b> P.O. Box 554 Lebanon, PA 17042 (717)272-6896
<b>Budds Creek MX/H.S.</b> (301)475-2000	<b>SETRA</b> 5165 Thompson Mill Rd. Lithonia, GA 30038
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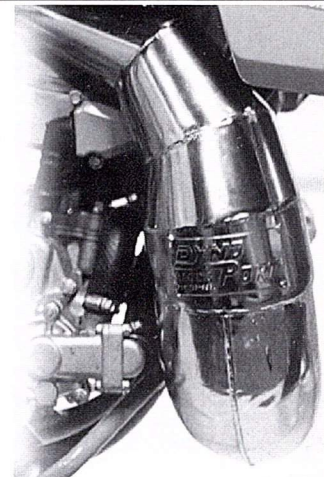
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# YAMAHA WR400F

Brand new, but born a legend

**B**eing on the opposite coast from Yamaha USA, we were introduced to the new Yamaha four-stroke in a kind of backwards way. January 20th we flew out to Las Vegas for the introduction of the WR400F, the "woods version" of the new YZ400, the offspring of Doug Henry's history-making four-stroke motocrosser. Once there, sequestered with my brother journalists, it was plain that Trail Rider was the only magazine in attendance that hadn't slung a leg over the YZ yet. All the other mags are right down the street from Yamaha's Southern California office, and it's easy for them to snap something new right up. We will work out a test on the YZ version for all you hare scramblers who are interested—and besides, we want to know if the YZ might just be better for really cut-throat enduro riding—but we're going to have to wait a month or so until we get a ride on one.e.

Not a big problem. We were so excited about getting to ride either of them—and to be truthful, something with a headlight on it is more to our liking—that riding the WR first is just fine with us.s.

So we're going to cut the crap here. We're not going to feed you the whole history of the new Yamaha thumper, and not going to construct some lengthy lead to this story in an attempt to show how hip we are. All we're going to do is spell out all the answers

to the few questions we've really got about the WR400F.

## First, What's Different?

Between the motocross-only YZ and the WR, you will find these differences on the WR:

- The WR uses a wide-ratio transmission, with all five gears completely different from what is in the YZ. Both bikes use a five-speed box.
- The airbox in the WR has a lid and extra sound baffling that you won't find on the YZ. The Yamaha engineers swear that taking the airbox lid off doesn't improve the power one bit.
- There's a large muffler with a spark arrestor

on the WR. In it, you will find a sound baffle in the tailpipe that quiets the bike right down, but is easily removable for serious racing.

• In order to pass import laws, the WR has been fitted with a stop on the throttle, that limits the bike to half throttle, out of the crate. It is easily removable, and we'd expect this feature to never get off the dealer's showroom floor.

• A bigger fuel tank; 3.2 gallons compared to the YZ's 2.1 gallons. Also, the petcock on the WR has a "reserve" position.

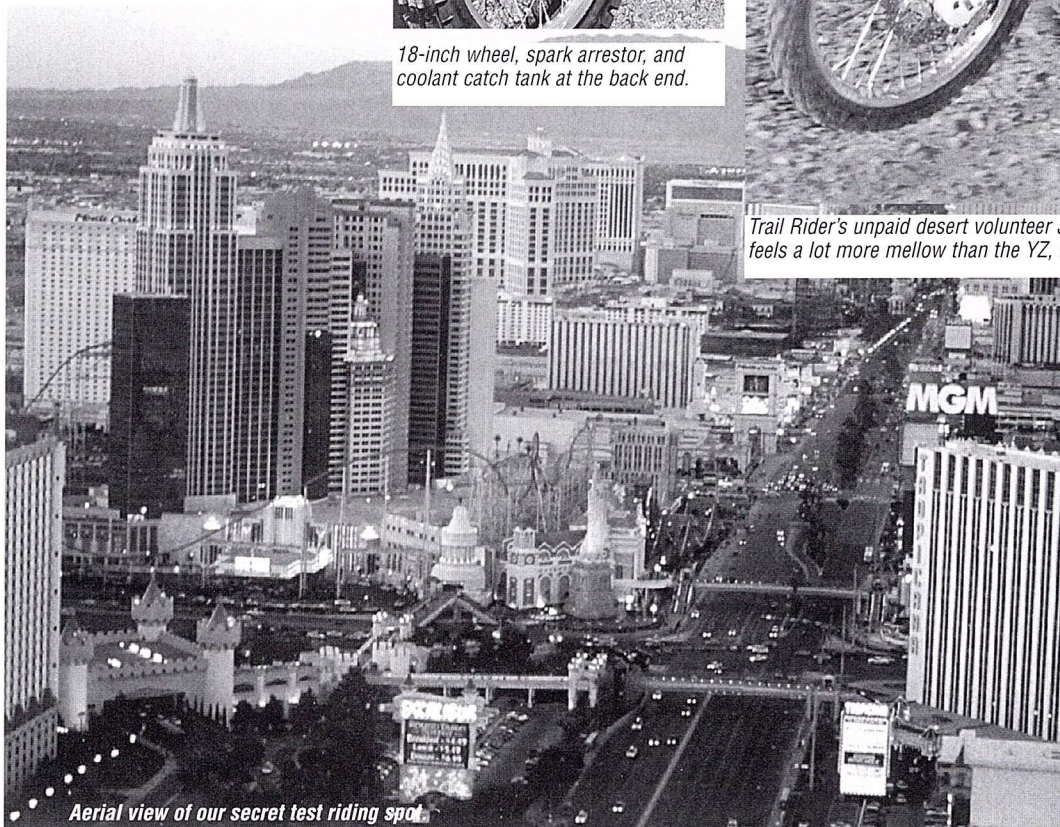
• Different seat and right side panel, to



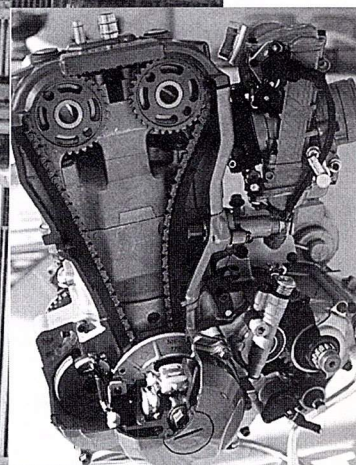
18-inch wheel, spark arrestor, and coolant catch tank at the back end.



Trail Rider's unpaid desert volunteer Jimmy Lewis twists the neck of the WR. It feels a lot more mellow than the YZ, but still has the juice to get exciting.



Aerial view of our secret test riding spot.



Cutaway engine shows all the good stuff inside. Note position sensor wire on carb.



accommodate the different tank and muffler.

- Different front hub configuration, to accommodate a drive for the odometer that is supplied on the stock bike (Yay!).

- 18-inch rear wheel.
- Steel rear sprocket, for enduro durability, and an o-ring chain.

- Frame-mounted sidestand.
- The WR has a lighting coil ignition (65 watt) with a larger flywheel. The WR also comes stock with a 60 watt headlight and an enduro-style taillight, and the electrical system uses a voltage regulator to keep everything happy.

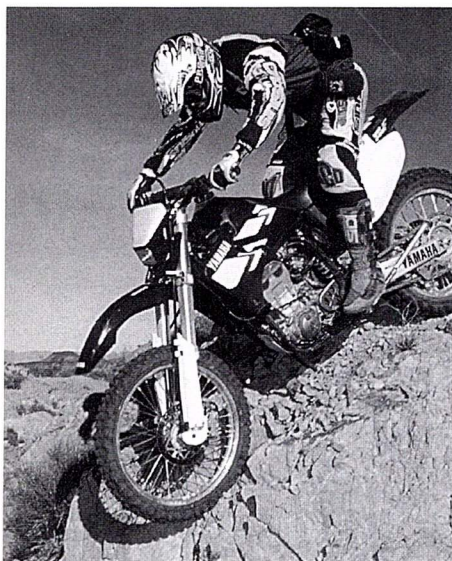
- The suspension components are the same between the two bikes, although the WR uses cushier valving and different spring weights to accommodate the differences in chassis configuration (different tank, higher weight).

- As far as we're told, the WR weighs about 12 pounds more than the YZ.

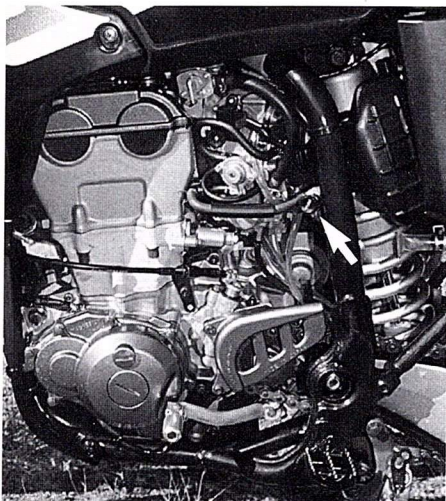
That's it. Aside from the above, the WR is identical to the YZ. The specs sound good, but we were all itching to ride it, and that's what we did next.

#### Lighting It Up

Shades of the Suzuki RMX, two things really hobble the WR400: the factory-installed throttle limiter and the exhaust insert. The throttle limiter is a metal stop-bar screwed onto the side of the carb, and it is easily replaced with



The WR handles well for a brand-new bike, although the suspension will need tuning if you race it.



Brand new motor. The hot start button (arrow), choke, pumper carb and compression release all make starting fairly painless.

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605 Cross Country, new.....	\$7295	\$6400

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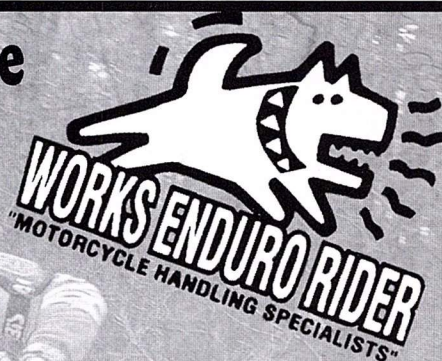
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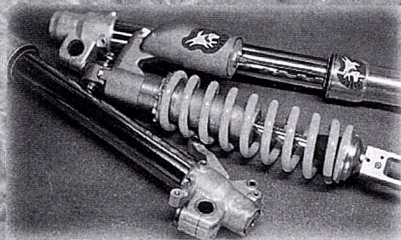
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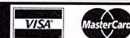


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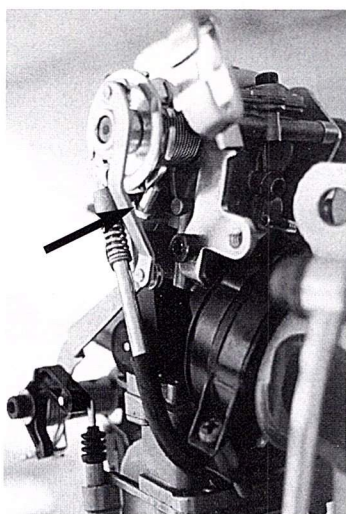




the stop-bar from the YZ, which is shorter (and therefore allows the throttle to open fully). If you want an education in mellow, ride around with the throttle limiter in place. It feels exactly like a bike that's limited to half-throttle, and they do this to pass EPA sound requirements for importation.

You take the exhaust insert out, and it wakes up the top end power somewhat, but it also makes the bike quite noisy. Most everybody does the same thing to the Honda XRs, and they too become offensively noisy with the insert out. We only had one day to ride the bike, and no time to test jetting or anything, but we'll stick our necks out and recommend that everyone back east leave the noise insert in—it doesn't seem to affect the meat of the power that much, and the bike is much more pleasant to ride without the extra noise. Either that or wait for White Brothers or someone else to come up with a turn-down insert that comes midway between the two stock options.

Brand-new and cold, the bike we had was a little finicky to start, but that's normal with a new, unfamiliar four-stroke. Like any thumper, you have to make sure it's just past top dead center on the compression stroke before you give it the serious boot, and it's easy to do that with the WR400 because it has a handlebar-mounted compression release. The bike also has a pumper carb on it, so you have to keep in mind that every time you crack the



*The throttle stop is located on the right side of the carb body, and can be replaced with a YZ stop easily.*

throttle open you're squirting go-juice in the cylinder. The choke button is easy to get at, and the bike also has a hot-start button that's a little unique. When you pull it out, it opens a valve that bleeds fresh air past the carb and straight into the intake manifold. In essence, it is a switch that opens a metered air leak. So you have every option available to make the bike easier to start.

And basically, it is easy to start. Choke when it's cold, none when it's warm, and use the hot-start button when you dump it. Never touch the throttle when you're starting, unless you know it needs the throttle open (which is intuitive when you really get to understand a four-stroke, trust

us). You don't have to kick it like a Harley rider, just boot it through smartly.

All the controls are typical Japanese, and we're not talking stereotype here; at least we think we're not. The clutch feels light, the brakes feel right, the kickstart lever isn't terribly long, like all the Euro four-strokes. It's a good, quality feel, overall. And the cockpit is roomy, which is a little surprising in a bike with a fairly short wheelbase. Dare we say it—it feels like a YZ..

#### Riding It

So with all the fiddling, familiarizing, un-plugging and bar adjusting out of the way, we final-

ly fired it up and went for a ride. You're not going to feel a real grunt off the bottom out of this bike, like a Honda XR. Instead, Yamaha built what will be referred to as a "midrange" bike, a bike that feels better ridden in the midrange rather than torqued around all over the place. But remember, this is still a four-stroke. It's a lot like a Husaberg in this regard. People who are used to grunty four-strokes, or expect their arms to be yanked out of their sockets, are going to say that the bike is "soft" off the bottom. It isn't. It just feels that way. When you get used to it, you find that it has enough bottom end to chug you through anything you point it at. It just doesn't have any excess.

The other thing we found kind of odd is the smoothness of the gear engagement. When you click it into gear you don't feel anything. They've got a cush-drive clutch hub of some type in there, and there's no clunk or click or jerk forward or anything. It just goes into gear and waits for you to ease out the clutch.

When you do that, it just moves off. Yes, they put a wide-ratio gearbox on this bike, but the transmission ratios are just about perfect. First gear is low enough for just about anything, and every gear after that just steps along in procession, without missing a beat. We noticed no shifting quirks, no popping out off gear, and no stickiness in the shifting at all. It's as smooth as a baby's behind, and when you stop you can easily find neutral any time you want.

Or wait a minute—should we quote Sidney Dickson and say it's as smooth as a mashed potato sandwich on white bread with mayo? You get the idea..

Powerwise, the WR400 is going to make a lot of people happy. It's really close to an XR400; so close we're not going to be able to tell which is quicker until we get both of these

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competitors together at the same time. We think the WR is a little faster than the XR, but like we said, not quite as torquy off the bottom. The WR is also not as hellishly violent in the midrange as a Husaberg 400, which a lot of people find a little intimidating. Like the transmission, the power output is smooth and predictable, exactly what you'd expect from a 400 four-stroke.

Is the above paragraph not what you wanted to hear? There's no way around it, the WR400 has good power, but it's not a missile. The YZ400 is a ground-breaking bike—it's the first four-stroke motocrosser introduced by a Japanese manufacturer. The YZ has a lot of impressive features: a double overhead cam five-valve head, a position sensitive carb slide, close-ratio MX transmission and plenty of power, with power delivery that a lot of test riders tell me is not going to be pleasant in the tight woods. It's a heck of a bike, but unfortunately the WR400 was born in its shadow and everyone expects the WR to be also a new,

wild, outrageous machine. And, so far as we can tell after one day of riding it, it isn't. It's just a new, good enduro-type four-stroke and it's going to be wildly popular and very good at what it does. But it's not going to scare you when you twist it open. You'll just be happy you own it..

#### Suspension and Handling

One place the WR is going to really turn heads is in the handling. Yamaha told us over and over that they were basing this bike on the YZ two stroke, and by golly we believe they've done it. Yes, it weighs more than a two-stroke, and it also weighs more than the YZ400, but it carries the weight well. With just a one-day ride so far, and absolutely no fiddling with suspension clickers, spring preload, fork oil level and all the things we usually fool with, the bike handled really well. Very neutral, allowing you to sit in the middle of the bike and feel like both ends were in control, even in Nevada's severely tractionless conditions. There was also no hint of headshake, even at speed in gravel sandwashes, and a good feel available for what both ends of the bike were doing. We'll predict with confidence that this bike will handle very well in eastern conditions.

The suspension is also good. Yamaha fitted the bike with conventional forks with adjustable compression and rebound settings, exactly the same as the YZ, and the rear shock is also off the YZ, and fully adjustable. Trail riders and anybody who rides the WR strictly for fun will probably be perfectly happy with the stock suspension. Racers, of course, are

#### SPECIFICATIONS

##### Yamaha WR400F

Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled 4 stroke
Displacement:	399cc
Bore/Stroke:	92 X 60.1mm
Transmission:	Five-speed WR
Gearing:	N/A
Chain:	O-ring
Tank Capacity:	3.2 gal.
Carburetion:	Keihin 39 FCR
Ignition:	CDI 65w lighting
Forks:	KYB Conv. forks
Suspension Travel:	11.8 in.
Front Brake:	Hydraulic disc
Front Tire:	Dunlop 490 80/100X21
Rear Suspension:	Adj. Comp./Reb.
Suspension Travel:	12.4 in.
Rear Brake:	Hydraulic disc
Rear Tire:	Dunlop 695 120/90X18
Seat Height:	39 in.
Wheelbase:	58.8 in.
Ground Clearance:	14.7 in.
Claimed Dry Weight:	240 lbs.
Suggested Retail Price:	\$5899

going to be a different story.

And we say this because the WR has what we're beginning to recognize as a typical Japanese trail bike damping curve. It seems like almost all of the off-road bikes from the Orient have a suspension setup that is soft in the beginning of the travel and then it becomes rapidly firmer after about half the travel is used up. Of course, it's a good theory, but we think that in the interest of safety all of these bikes feature damping that gets firm enough to almost absorb a drop from the average second-story roof in the last part of travel. Racers and real serious trail riders know that better response can be obtained by taking the components to a reputable suspension tuner, who will take out the "wall" of damping in the last part of the stroke and



Yamaha YZ400F

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New England riders know ahead of time that there isn't a bike made that handles our typical root and rock infested terrain well without modification, and the WR400 will be the same as the rest. It will work for some, and we'll bet it works even better once it's broken in, and one has a chance to closely tune the damping adjustments, oil level and all that. But when we get a WR400 test bike out to the East Coast, we'll wind up having the suspension modified, just to see how good it can be.

### Should You Buy It?

A curious thing is happening across the country. The YZ400 has been so anxiously anticipated that there are thousands of motocrossers eagerly climbing aboard a four-stroke for the first time, and frankly they have no idea what they're doing. They think the YZ is going to roost around the track like their YZ or RM or whatever, and they're finding that they have to learn how to ride all over again. They also don't know how to start a four-stroke, and they're going to have to learn how to do it correctly, because you can't start a thumper the same way you start a two-stroke. We'll predict a lot of broken kickstarters from loads of heavy-footed MXers on YZ400s, not because the parts are weak, but just because they don't know how to kick them.

And the same thing goes for the WR400. If you're a four-stroke rider, you're going to really like this bike. Casual trail riders are going to love it from the start. Enduro riders and hare scramblers are going to be more critical, but they'll all finally agree that this bike is a very viable alternative between what is already available from Japanese manufacturers in the four stroke class, and the relatively higher cost European machines from Husaberg, KTM and Husky, among others. If you're a two-stroke rider, don't expect to switch to a thumper and immediately be thrilled. You'll have to learn how to ride any four-stroke, and the WR400 is no different.

Us, we're thrilled to see it out there, and can't wait to get one to the East Coast to see how it fits in with our riding. We predict it'll be great. Yamaha will sell a million of them, aftermarket companies will burn the midnight oil creating all sorts of hop-up parts for them, and a whole new crowd of satisfied riders will be piloting the bold, brilliant blue Yamahas. This is going to be a fun bike, and we can't wait to get it muddy. □

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# BELLTOWN SCRAMBLES

## Last tango in Union

By Cheri Alix, photos by Paul Clipper

Union, CT 11/16

**S**now early in November is not unusual in New England, it's just not welcome. Especially when there's one final round remaining in the hare scramble series. The Belltown Scramble was originally scheduled for July, but due to land problems the club had to reschedule the event at another location. The new location was at Martin Michalec's, where two other scrambles were held earlier in the year.

Friday and Saturday's storm dumped over three inches of snow and ice on the area, but this is New England, and it takes more than freezing temps and a little snow to keep most riders off their bikes.

Over 140 riders showed up for the final event of the year, braving the freezing temperatures and threat for more snow. The Junior event was run first in the day on vir-

gin snow. Seventeen Junior, eleven Minis and three Women's class riders were on hand for the final round. This race was run the same as the main event, but instead of six laps they ran three laps. Derek Phelps started his KTM on the front row and stayed there for the entire race. Phelps took the Junior class win with just over two minutes on second place Joe Senecal. Mike Peristere finished third for the day back another six minutes.



Dave Gunn does the big squint; what most riders were doing once they took their goggles off.

In the Mini class, it was another runaway win for Rob Langenback. Langenback completed all three laps to take the class win with almost ten minutes on second place finisher, John Moore. Dawn Shayer edged out Heidi Landon, who has been dominating the class all year, to take the Women's class win by just over one minute. Landon finished second, with third place Pamela McCann close behind.

The Expert and Amateur riders lined up for the Blackwater-style start, four to a row with



Art Menzel held on, rode safe, and stayed upright to claim second in the AA class.

the first four rows reserved for the top AA riders. The front row had only one rider, Manchester Honda's Josh McLevy. Lined up on the second row were Dave Gunn, Arthur Menzel and Midtown Kawasaki's Randy McCann.

The flag was dropped at 1:30 for the start of the six lap, six mile event. Many riders had studded their tires or were running spikes. Once all the snow was pushed aside the not yet frozen ground turned to mud and rock. Those with spiked tires hit the rocks and skittered right off the trail.

McLevy opted not to run spikes, much to the criticism of some people. This choice proved to his advantage. As the ruts in the snow grew and more and more rocks were exposed, traction became key and spikes became useless. By the second lap, a nice groove was carved in the snow around the



Josh McLevy never gave up the lead and never looked back. Snow? What snow?



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Searching for traction and finding it. The fresh snow wasn't as much trouble as it looked to be.

entire course. Tech Tubes/Link/Spectro-backed McLevy had put thirty seconds on second place Arthur Menzel by the end of the first lap. Law was in third place followed by McNeil and Valentine. The riders held their positions for the entire race, with McLevy continually putting close to thirty seconds a lap on the rest of the pack. At the end of the race, soaking wet with frozen



An unidentified Hoot Owl blazes a trail through the woods, with the pack close behind.

feet, McLevy took the win with a comfortable margin of just over three minutes.

"I stayed on my bike all day," said McLevy, "The course just became a big rut full of water. I was freezing but I had a great ride, and I love the new Honda 250."

Menzel took second for the day with another two minutes over third place Ken Law. Open class rider Ken Valentine edged out Kawasaki of Putnam's Luke McNeil for fourth overall, with McNeil settling for fifth. Valentine also took the Expert Class overall. Expert Vet rider Russell Bain had been in contention at the beginning of the race for the Expert Overall, but three fouled plugs put him back several minutes. Bain spent the rest of the race battling back and forth with Brian Lawson, (Expert 125 class). Bain finally got the jump on Lawson on the final

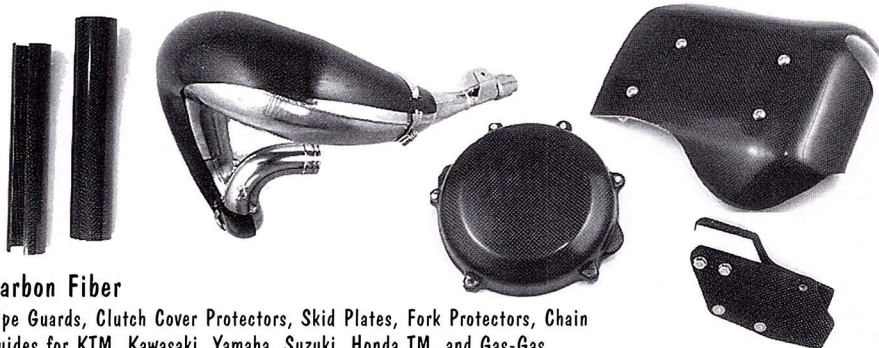
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1. Josh McLevy Hon			4. Justin Tucker Yam			4. Chris Chasse Suz			3. Hans Neff KTM		
2. Arthur Menzel Kaw			5. Chris Poirer Hon			5. Kabbaul Tasha CRE			4. Derek Carpenter Suz		
3. Ken Law Yam			<b>Novice 200</b>			<b>Amateur 200</b>			5. David Bradley Yam		
4. Luke McNeil Kaw			1. George Diedrich kaw			1. Drew Carpenter Suz			<b>Expert 250</b>		
5. Randy McCann Kaw			2. James Menard Yam			2. Albert Joachim Yam			1. Brian O'Neil Kaw		
<b>Junior</b>			3. Todd Nascemento Kaw			3. Everett Maynard Kaw			2. Dave Simcock CRE		
1. Derek Phelps KTM			4. Michael Pudlo Kaw			4. Robert Hart Kaw			3. Justin Provenal Kaw		
2. Joe Senecal Yam			5. Douglas Audrey Kaw			5. Dan Murray Kaw			4. Bruce Yuill Yam		
3. Mike Peristere Yam			<b>Novice Veteran</b>			<b>Amateur Open</b>			5. Pete Byrne Yam		
4. Dan Young KTM			1. Michael Litwin, Jr Kaw			1. Jim Walsh Hon			<b>Expert Open</b>		
5. Anthony Moore Yam			2. Michael Moiniham Kaw			<b>Amateur Veteran</b>			1. Ken Valentine KTM		
<b>Mini</b>			3. Bruce Cloney Kaw			1. Ron Bertrand G-G			2. Roger Billharz KTM		
1. Rob Langenback Yam			4. Bill Kelly Hon			2. Art Randolph Yam			3. Chris Cramer Hon		
2. John Moore Yam			5. Charles Jouver Hon			3. David Dzenutis Hon			<b>Expert Vet</b>		
3. Brian Choquette Yam			<b>Novice Senior</b>			4. Robert Larson Kaw			1. Russell Bain Hon		
4. Scott Decosta kaw			1. Stephen Messenger Kaw			5. Alan Whitford Hon			2. Lance Longo Suz		
5. Tim Langenback Hon			2. Frank Bauer KTM			<b>Amateur Senior</b>			3. Bob White CRE		
<b>Women</b>			3. Michael Ruhlin Hon			1. Chris Fahan Hon			4. Ken Held Yam		
1. Dawn Shayer Hon			4. Charles Kennedy Suz			2. Bob Young KTM			<b>Expert Senior</b>		
2. Heidi Landon Kaw									1. Steve Kanya Hon		

lap, only to foul a plug for the fourth time. Lawson went on to take second place in the 125 class, with Brett Costello taking the 125 class win. Bain was able to change his plug in less than a minute, allowing him to finish all six laps and take the Vet class win.

In the Amateur class, Drew Carpenter, riding his Suzuki 125, edged out Vet rider Ron Bertrand by one minute and ten seconds to take the Amateur class overall. Carpenter and Bertrand were the only two Amateur riders to complete all six laps, putting them in

the top twenty overall.

Now that the season is over, we would all like to give thanks to everyone who has allowed us to use their property to run our events. We would like to give special thanks to Martin Michalec and his wife, Christina, who let us run three hare scrambles, an enduro and several Junior enduros on their land. Without people like them, there wouldn't be a hare scramble series in New England. We all had a great season and look forward to next year. □



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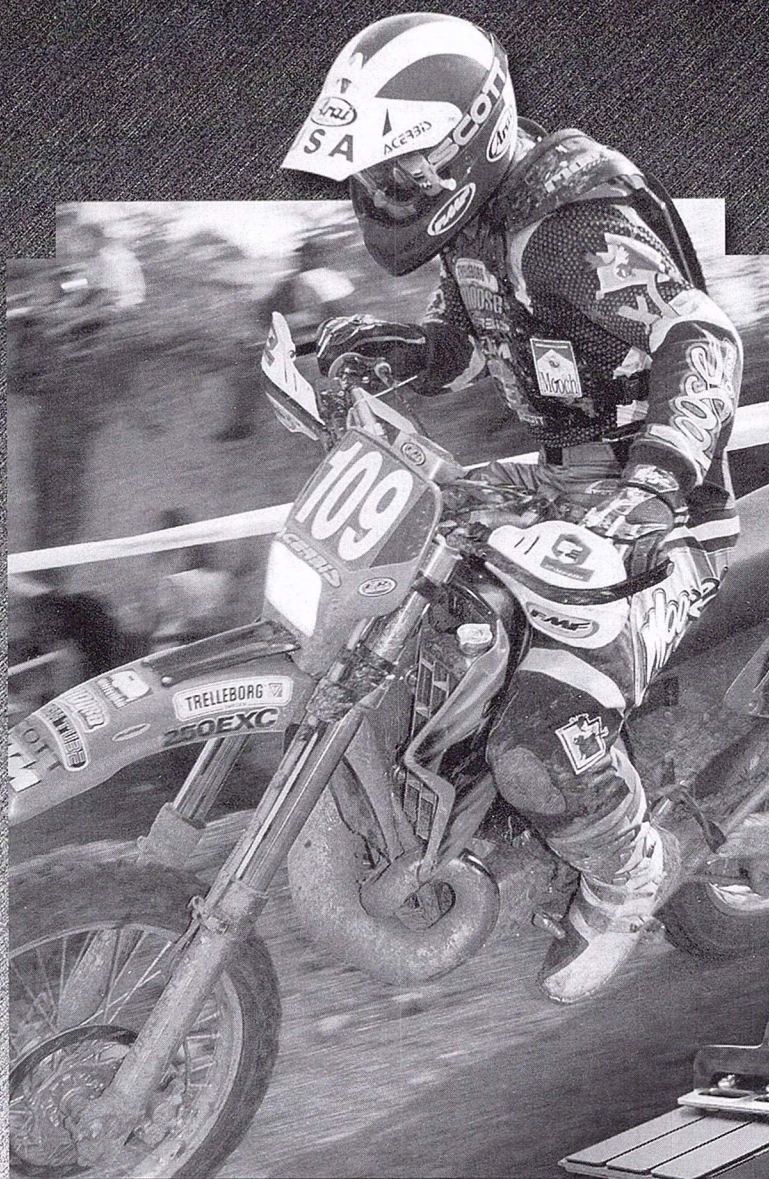
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# ATTACK THE TIGHT!

It takes a little technique and a lot of practice

**S**pend any time watching or riding eastern Enduros and you're going to see the best riders perform a few miracles now and then. By far, the most amazing feat the fast guys accomplish is getting through tight trees safely and very, very quickly.

We're not talking about brush, and small saplings. Getting through brush and branches is just a matter of how much of a beating you can take. You hack through it and trust in your hand guard/brush guard combination and the padding in your gloves, and think about the big trophy at the finish.

But for substantial trees—something that isn't going to give if you hit it—you'll need a little more finesse. Chances are you've hit a tree hard; I just did it the other day. The tree doesn't move; instead, your handlebars turn as the shock of the impact courses through your body, actually making your arm and shoulder ache from the sudden hit. Once the wheel's good and turned, the bike heads off in a new, usually very alarming direction, and in my case I then hit another tree, which repeated the process in a new direction. By the time everything came to rest, I was standing in the middle of the trail watching the bike leap off into the woods,

no doubt wanting to get away from the bozo who doesn't know how to steer around trees.

Because that's the way it's done—you steer around the trees, rather than trying to wedge between them both sides at the same time. The wedge technique works if the trees really aren't that close together; say 32 inches or so, while your bars are 29 or 30, and you can be really, really accurate with your steering. If the surface is dicey or you don't have confidence in your front tire, the wedge can be a disaster waiting to happen, since you have an equal chance of hitting on either side.

Instead you steer around the trees, picking one as the target and basically ignoring the other. Every situation is different, and you'll have to adjust your technique accordingly, but practice will eventually make perfect...or as close to perfect as you can get.

Usually, in any pair of tight trees you're arrowed through, one is farther away than the other—they aren't exactly side-by-side. If you have a choice in your approach, you want to take the farthest-away tree as the target tree, and the other tree simply doesn't matter. In a nutshell you want to steer

straight at the base of the target tree and use it for the pivot of a turn; a turn around the other tree, the one you're ignoring. Nothing else matters but to hit the base of that target tree with your front tire, and then to turn away from it. When you drop into the turn the bike will actually fall away from the target tree, allowing the right side of the handlebars (in these pictures) to clear the tree.

Look at the pictures. In the first picture, if the rider didn't do anything he'd smack that tree solid with the right hand guard, stopping the bike cold and sending him right over the bars. He doesn't want to do this, so he aims at the base of the tree, forces a quick pivot turn to the left just long enough to allow the handlebar to clear, and then just as quickly jerks the bike back to the right, so he doesn't clip the left-side tree with his shoulder, and also to be ready for the next tight-tree turn he'll have to make. Or, in this case, he jerks it back upright to get square with the ground and ensure maximum acceleration towards the next obstacle.

It takes practice to build your confidence, and confidence to attack every tight spot.



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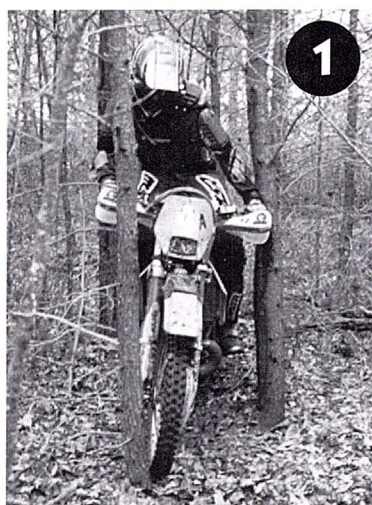
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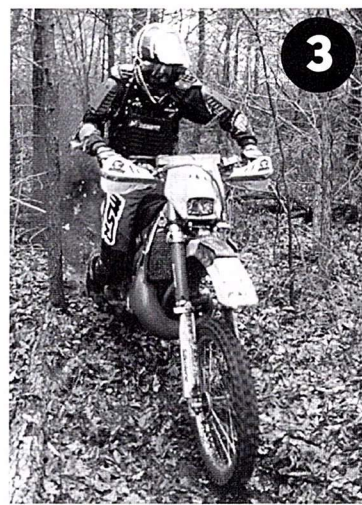
Practice first on one tree, aiming at the base of the trunk and snapping quick turns off of it—two turns, one away from the tree and then one quickly back upright, and on the gas. Once you have this down, move on to squeezing between a pair of trees. Start out with trees somewhat wide apart—say 36 inches or more—and then work your way down to as tight as you can stand. If you carefully practice this technique for just an hour, you'll be surprised at how much skill and confidence you can build. **Id.**

And the photo model? That's ECEA champ Mark Spence caught in a motor-drive sequence at one of the early-season enduros last year. He knows how to get through trees fast, and you can do it too with a little practice. **□**



**Photo 1: Recipe for Disaster.** He's aiming straight at the target tree. If he doesn't turn at the right time, he'll smack his right handlebar so hard it'll make his teeth rattle. He doesn't want to do this, so he plans on hooking a pivot turn right as the tire hits the base of the tree. Note that in this example his angle of attack sets it up so he's already out of danger from the left-side tree, and all he has to do is get the right side through clean.

**Photo 2: Critical Mass.** The bike is heeled over, ready to rocket out of control into the woods to the left, but he controls it by momentarily chopping the throttle. Momentum alone allows him to complete enough of the turn to get his right handlebar through, and only when he's safely clear will he get back on the gas. If he hits the throttle right now the back end will come around violently and smack into the tree on the right side. Although not as painful as hitting the front, it still isn't the fast way through, so he chills and waits a beat until the bike is ready to be straightened up.



**Photo 3: Bye Bye.** The tight spot is history, the gas is on, Spence is gone. Note two things: he's got his right foot down and far back, which isn't always necessary—very often you can slam through a tight spot with both feet on the pegs. I'd suspect he's got his foot down and back for the same reason I do it—people with big feet will catch their toes or side of the foot on the tree every time if they don't get it out of the way. Also, note the torn sleeve on the jersey. In an ideal world, you'd never even touch the tree, but you can only be so accurate. If you're worried about your clothes—or losing a little blood—you're never going to go really fast. Practice, practice, practice.

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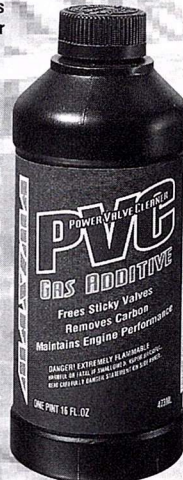
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# VEGAS TO RENO

Team Cosa Nostra takes on the Nevada desert

by Jerry Bernardo

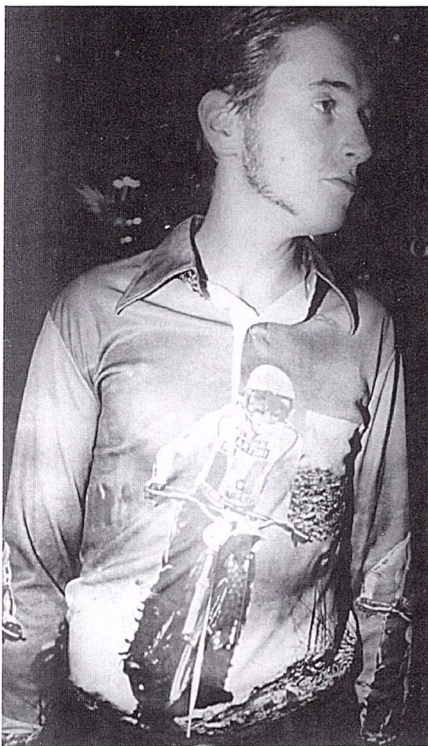
## THE TEAM

I called my teammate from the Incas Rally to invite him to race out here to the West Coast. Chris Smith and I raced as Team Cosa Nostra in Peru. Smith, a five time gold medalist at the Six Days, is a young enduro wizard. Brother of New Jersey mob boss Drew Smith, he was raised in the pines. All he knows is trees, rocks, whoops, slop, repeat. Traditionally a 125 pilot, I asked him if he would like to race Vegas to Reno on a factory Honda XR600. I said "Ya, we'll get my buddy Keefer, make it a three man team, race Open Expert and win the class!" (an air of positive thought is essential). He balked a moment then decided, what the hell, dirt is dirt, you just get to see more of it doing 100 m.p.h. The clincher I offered was a free round trip ticket to California from Jersey. (lotsa TV show = lotsa frequent flyer miles).

Now a little about Keefer. He is 21 years old. Translation = he's 21 years old. sometimes he flakes out, maybe tells a fib or two, doesn't really have much of a life (sorry queef) but he is way fast. Keefer rides a 125 and finishes top 15 OA at local desert races, can jump everything, rides moto x and super x, an all around versatile high desert rat weaned on wet winter dirt. Keef had a little XR four stroke experience riding out of XR's Only. The big 600 would be no stranger.

## THE BIKE

Bruce Ogilvie of American Honda is the man when it comes to long desert races, not only as a rider but a team manager. Logistics? Piece of cake. Pit support? Handled. Factory prepped race bike? How many? Bruce, along with Honda would generously hook us up with basically a stock XR600. Specs to follow...1998 Honda XR600, Renthal bars, Scott's steering stabilizer (sorry W.E.R.), FMF pipe and silencer, dry-brake, Pirelli tires, One Concept graphics. Nice reli-



With a shirt like that, you'd better be fast. Chris Smith and Roger D. looking for action in the Biggest Little City in the World. Smith was the kickoff rider, the other boys brought it home.



Fuel stop, Team Honda style. Six seconds and you're full and outta there, whether you're ready or not.

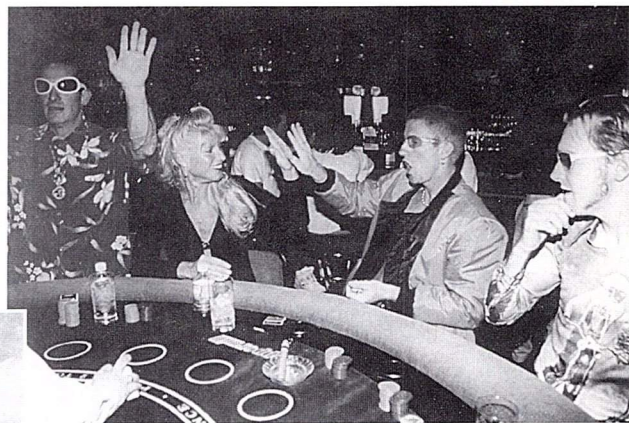
able 95mph sled. Bitchin FMF suspension. Johnny Campbell and Red built it, broke it in, balanced the wheels and brought it up to Vegas. (these guys are on my Xmas list!)

## THE RACE

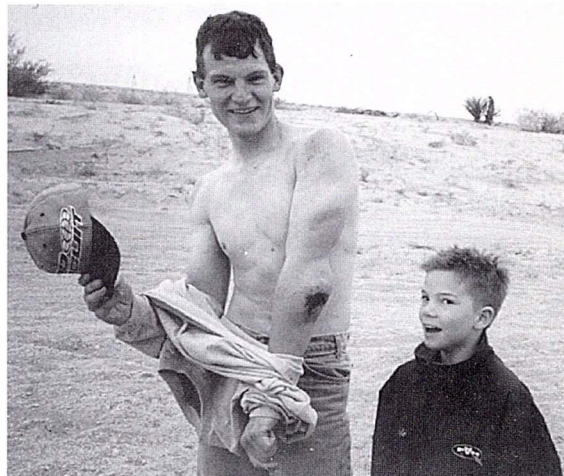
If you want to get your ass kicked on the East Coast, race one of Dave Coombs' races. West Coast I'd suggest Best in the Desert and Casey Folks. I can't say enough about Casey Folks (good or bad!). He set up the Nevada Rally, countless Silver State series races, Tonopah, Laughlin, Mesquite. The Best in the Desert crew gets shit handled. If his rider meetings seem long and boring that's because he's telling you everything now, not later when you blew it, broke the rules, dnf'd and whined. If you trophy one of his events you accomplished a great goal. Casey gives no one special treatment, not even his kids Daryl and Bryan. Sign up, pay, race, clean up your pit, see ya next time.

Vegas to Reno's second year would be 534 miles of rocks, cart roads, g-outs, sand washes and grueling Nevada terrain billed as "the longest off-road race in U.S." It would include not only motorcycles but also trucks, buggies and Quads. Last year's winners Ty Davis and Paul Krause finished in a little over nine hours! Get to bed boys and girls, we race at dawn.

The Vegas to Reno course would have 12 gas stops. Rider



A little post-race gaming by Team Cosa Nostra.



Co-winner Donnie Book shows off a gnarled elbow to Kyle the Skateboard Punk, one of his trophies from the race.





Team Captain Bernardo kicks back with a victory cherooot at the Peppermill.

changes can only occur in these areas. The pre race chatter was "the first section is really rocky." "It's gonna be really dusty." "The race won't be won in the first section." We decided (along with suggestions from KTM's Scot Harden) Smith would ride from pit 1 to 2, Keefer 2 to 5, Jerry 5 to 8, Smith 8 to 9, Keefer 9 to 11, Jerry 11-12, Smith finishing up 12 to Reno. Our team was about the 34th bike off the line. I saw Chris Smith at pit 1, he smiled and said all was fine. That didn't mean the first section wasn't gnarly, he just likes it like that.

We drove to pit 2 and Keefer was there all jacked up on Red Bull (an energy drink, one of our sponsors). He said "I drank two!" (Tweak!). The exchange was made and off he went. We paralleled the course in the Honda Passport and watched him blaze through

the dust for a while. I knew he was down for catching and passing people A.S.A.P. At pit 5 I suited up and waited, chatting with Mike Healey who was waiting for his teammate Greg Zitterkopf. Keefer soon arrived, told me the bike is mint, be careful for blind turns and g-outs (note: because of timing and such, not one of Team Cosa Nostra had ridden the bike prior to the event!).

#### THE CRASH

(remember the blind turn thing?)

I bombed off and was surprised at how fast the course was. You'd ride wide open for a while, then they'd throw some boring sections in or tight cart road turns. Just before pit 7 I was flying down this graded road with bitchin s-turns, thinking "Wow, this is like Pike's Peak" (Harden had told me about this section, having ridden last year's event). Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a mom and her son in lawn chairs in the back of a pick up. Spectators I thought. When I got close the boy bolts up and waves an orange flag. I thought "Hmm, Casey said nothin' about flags...?" Right then the road rose up, I got on the binders to crest the hill and see a ninety degree right hander. Approximate speed 70mph. "Shit!" I panicked and hit the brakes full tilt, losing the front end and flying off into the shrubs ass over band box.

I only remember the feeling of my brand new helmet grinding on the road like the tip of a stick match. I stopped 40 yards away, the bike had the rear fender stuffed underneath itself, the silencer was bent down near the swingarm, bars were a little tweaked, my fanny pack was ripped off and my chest protector had a separated shoulder cup. (thanks Acerbis) Just minor cuts and a helmet that looked like some speed freak got hold of it with coarse sandpaper. The bike didn't want to start with the choked off exhaust. It was a hot, wadded, unhappy four stroke. I kicked and kicked. The truck lady came up and asked if I was okay. She said the pit is a quarter mile away! Great. Suddenly the bike spit. I said "Oh, you want to start!" Ten minutes later it fired. I limped into the pits and the Honda boys bent it back to the best of their ability. "The next pit is 40 miles away!" I took off thinking too much to myself about wadding, but we weren't out of it. An hour later I handed the bike to Smith explaining what happened, what was wrong, blah, blah, blah. He said "I know, get off the bike Jerr." I jumped in the Acerbis van with Cary Pennington and ESPN2's cameraman Doug Franke. We blasted to our next destination, pit 11, two hours away!

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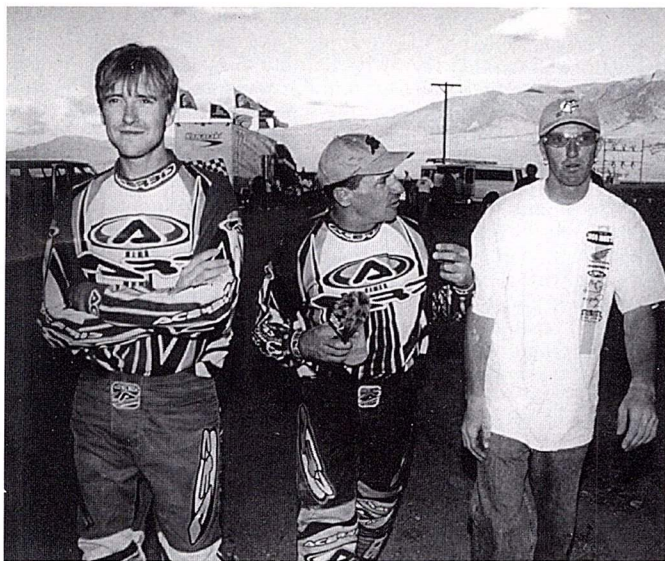
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#### ON TO RENO

At 11 I was to receive the bike from Keefer. My section from 11 to 12 was short, 30 miles, compared to the 120 miles I did already. Keefer pulled in and said, "I hauled ass! You can just cruise."

"Bullshit, I'm pinning this thing!"

Pit 11 to 12 was a dirt road, wide open, 90mph almost the whole way. Easy, you just had to pay attention. When I got to 12 no one was there. I mean Smith and the support crew had not yet arrived. The

Honda pit guys were all scurrying around. "Do you need water?" "Are you all set?" I sat there revving the bike, asking where was Smith?! They didn't know. One guy said "Finish it up, Jerry" I just smiled and took off. The last 42 miles were cool, fast roads, a killer sand wash, some rolling hills, then up the mountain through the pine forest on a tight jeep trail strewn with softball size rocks. Smith would be all over this I thought. I was riding cautious knowing two things: A: I had already used up my crash certificate, and B: Don't blow it now. You always hear the stories, "Ten miles from the finish my hub exploded."...and such. Soon I could see

the finish. There was Casey, the trooper he is, greeting all finishing competitors. I said, "That was a blast!" 'cause it was, if you trained and paid attention, that is. If you were weak and didn't prepare it could have been a long day.

#### RESULTS

Five hundred thirty-four miles, 11 hours and 14 minutes, average speed of about 48mph. First Open Expert, 19th motorcycle overall. We lost 38 minutes on the crash.

We were top ten OA at the time, but hey, whatever! Donnie Book and Dave Ondas finished first overall on the Kawie 500. Ty and Krause had some pipe problems and got second, four minutes back. The Honda team of brothers Johnny and Jamie Campbell got third. KTM's brother team, 17 and 19 year-old Nevada natives, the Pearsons, were fourth. Larry Roeseler was first Expert overall and first Ironman. 40 years old and 534 miles solo, bring it on! LR also races McPherson trucks solo at the Baja 1000, which takes 22 hours!

No one was seriously hurt. Two trucks snuck into the top 20 overall. Casey yelled at everyone cause the finish area was a trash dump. (some folks have no class). Our support group got tweaked on Red Bull, we horrified the casino at the Peppermill with our film crew. Some dork told me as I walked by, I "stole his trophy." I kept walking and said "come and get it." His girl muttered "next time." I was gonna have my girlfriend Vicki snap her arm off arm wrestling, but I had taken my last Prozac so I was mellow. Ogilvie was stoked on our finish and didn't flinch at the twisted XR. Chris Smith wished he rode the last section. He wanted more! Keefer said on the podium "I want to thank my mom and dad for being horny that night!" I strongly suggest riding the 1998 Vegas to Reno, you'll have fun. We did, but then again Team Cosa Nostra always does. (Note: Cosa Nostra is Italian slang for the Mafia). □

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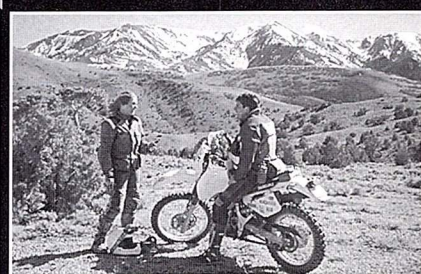
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PEE WEE	Parade Lap - 10:00	EVENT - Immediately following parade lap	
B CLASS		EVENT - 12:00 pm	2 hour duration (APPROX)
AA/A CLASSES		EVENT - 12:00 pm	3 hour duration (APPROX)

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# KEEP YOUR GOGGLES ON

## Avoiding the seeing-eye dog

**R**ecently we had a local hare scrambles, attended by the State Police Racing Commission, one of the governing bodies concerning racing in this area. The representative from the police became somewhat frantic when he saw racers coming around with their goggles hanging around their necks, and went so far as to stop and disqualify one of them.

Now, we know that in this case the police officer was just acting out of concern for that person's safety, but if you want our opinion, we feel that the state police should just go away and leave the racers alone. When you enter an event you sign a waiver that says, among other things, that you're accepting responsibility for your own actions. Every situation is different, and you can make a great argument that it's necessary to pull your goggles off when they get so crapped up that you can't see where you're going.

The trouble is, when you pull your goggles off, you expose your eyes to whatever abuse may be ahead, and sure as an eyeblink you stand a very good chance of blinding yourself when you ride with your eyes unprotected. Even if the trail is open enough that you don't have to worry about branches in the face, the fact still remains that the crud that wiped out your goggles is now going straight into your face, and if you don't sustain any kind of per-

manent damage you're still going to be picking rocks out of your red, swollen eyes for days.

So you should keep your goggles on. You should make this a mantra: Keep the goggles

keep them from fogging? Would you keep them on longer? Well, read on, and maybe we can help save your eyes.

### Fogging Out

How fast you fog your goggles depends on how much you sweat and what the outside temperature and humidity is like. Without going into a long discussion of what "dew point" means, suffice it to say that if it's cool and humid out you're going to have problems keeping your goggles clear. Classic attempted cures to this problem include all sorts of fog-free compounds on the inside of the goggle lens, and some folks even resort to coating their forehead with anti-perspirant deodorant. We've tried the anti-perspirant cure, and it actually works okay in some conditions, but if rain or sweat starts getting that goo in your eyes you're going to hate life. Anti-fog compounds also work if conditions aren't too bad, and there are all kinds available, all very similar in effectiveness. If you get stuck needing anti-fog and don't have any around, a bar of plain soap will work okay. Just rub the soap into the lens surface and polish it dry, without washing it all off.

However, the best way to keep from fogging your lens is to use a lens that's made to stay fog-free in the first place. Both Smith and Scott make replacement lenses for their goggles that



*Rain-X is one of the best things you can do to your goggle lenses to keep them clear. Use it only on the outside, though, and it works best on Lexan lenses.*

on, Keep the goggles on. But I know that many of you are used to pulling them off immediately as soon as they fog up a little. What if you could keep your goggle reasonably clean and

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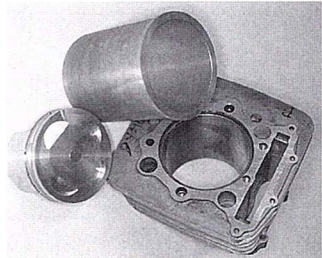
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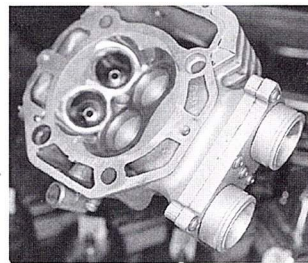
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are called "thermal" lenses, and they consist of two lenses sandwiched together with a foam strip holding them about two millimeters apart. This kind of lens works like a thermal window in your house, with the dead air space between acting as an insulating layer. The cold air only affects the outer lens, and it can get cold without condensing your perspiration on it because it's backed up by that air space, which is moisture-free. At the same time, the inner lens can warm up along with your face, and since it's protected against the cold air it has less of a tendency to fog. At the same time, all of these thermal lenses come pre-treated with an anti-fog coating on the inside lens, to make them even more resistant to fogging.

With a thermal lens, you will reduce your chances of fogging to a minimum. We use them all the time, and have found that the best tactic is to leave them on your face, even if you stop for a short bit. This way, the air doesn't have a chance to cool off that inside lens, which would make it a little more susceptible to fogging. Thermal lenses cost a little more, but we very highly recommend them.

#### Mudding Up

To keep mud and rain from making the outside of your goggle useless, we recommend a couple of different treatments. First, get some Rain-X and wipe down the outer lens with it. Don't do the inner lens, or the inside of a single-thickness Lexan lens. You should put anti-fog compounds and nothing else on the inside. Rain-X makes it harder for water and mud to stick to the lens, actually increases the scratch-resistance of the lens, and makes them a ton easier to clean off.

Next, if it's going to be really muddy, you need some sort of tear-offs. Regular tear-off lenses are available for all kinds of goggles, and they are one-use items. When they get crapped-up, you reach up and pluck them off,

and drop them in the bushes. We don't like them so much. Dropping them in the bushes is littering, and doing that puts us in the same league as the hikers. Maybe you can take the



*Smith Roll-Offs are the best answer to the tear-off conundrum. Use them with the little stick-on visor for best results. In front is a Scott thermal lens pre-drilled to fit Roll-Off canisters.*

used tear-off and put it in your jacket pocket, but in the heat of battle we don't think you'll do it.

Better than tear-offs are Roll-Offs, Smith Goggle's long time cure for the mud-face blues. A Roll-Off system is a pair of containers hooked to each side of your goggle lens, and between them runs a strip of optically clear film, much the same way film runs through a camera. When you pull the little Roll-Off string twice, it advances enough film to completely clear your vision. It works like a miracle, but it's best if you spend some quality time setting the system up before you use it. Smith also makes a little stick-on plastic shield that goes right above the moving film on the top of the goggle that helps waterproof it and hold it in place, and we'd very much recommend using

it—it helps a ton in muddy face-slappers. Smith makes Roll-Off systems for its own brand of goggles, and Scott just happens to make goggle lenses pre-drilled to fit a set of Roll-Offs. You can get them all at any good motorcycle dealer.

#### Putting It All Together

Using Roll-Offs on thermal lenses—and they make them—is the ultimate solution. Expect to spend a few bucks, but we're talking about your eyes here. It's worth it.

You should also carry some way to wipe the goggles clean. Pieces of paper towel or tissues are a bad idea, because they fall apart when they get wet. The best thing to carry is a small piece of cotton cloth—a washcloth from a cheap motel is the best—and keep it out where you can get at it fast. Like jammed into the waistband of your kidney belt, or even hooked to the handlebars with a rubber band daisy-chain. This way, when you stop at a check, or in a smooth section where you can take your hands off the bars, you can just grab it and wipe and go. Keep in mind that wiping is a little more complicated when you're using Roll-Offs, but you can do it if you use a light touch.

Finally, you need more than one set of goggles. This way you can change sweated-out or mudded-up goggles at a gas stop or even carry them in your jacket pocket. Ideally you should have three pair. One with full thermal lenses and Roll-Offs for the most heinous weather, one set with just thermal lenses for normal riding, and one set with plain lenses for the best, driest conditions, or another set with thermals.

Yes, it will take an investment in eyewear and preparation time, but it is really worth it when the conditions are grim and you still have your eyes covered. You read about it here, and that's the point: we want you to keep reading about everything here, and you need your eyes to do it. Now go pull a little goggle maintenance and we'll see you around. □

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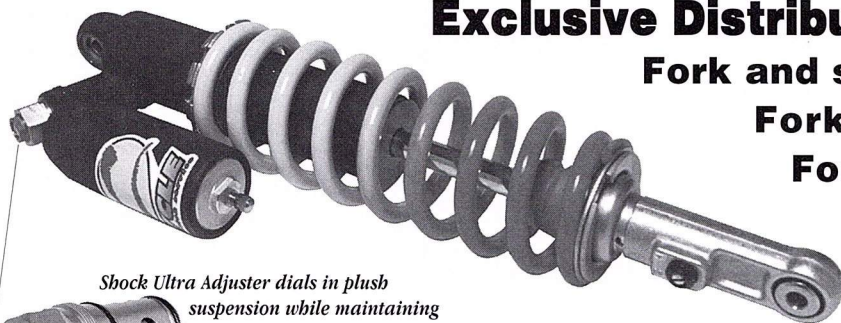
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# 1998 YAMAHA YZ250

## Blue Suede Choose

By Mark Uth

Quietly, behind all of the hoopla surrounding Yamaha's debut of the YZ400 motocrosser and twin YZ400WR off-road mount, has been the subsequent demise of the trusty YZ250WR. Yamaha's "wood-scroster" has enjoyed its share of acclaim over the years, despite playing the perennial technological step sister to the flagship YZ250. As such, for woods racers and serious trail riders, Yamaha's 1998 off-road line is limited to the YZ400WR thumper and a handful of trail bikes, including the XT and RT model lines, although the latter won't see the start control outside the Novice class. What this all boils down to is that if you want to ride a blue two stroke in 1998 (TM notwithstanding), you're going to have to step up to the full motocrosser. Fortunately, this turns out to be a no-brainer, as the '98 YZ250 is more suited to woods riding than ever before.

Fact is, many top off-road riders have chosen the YZ over the WR in recent years anyway, and, after riding a production '98 250, we can certainly understand why. Most of the early YZ250 reports complained of mild power and soft suspension that weren't up to snuff within moto/Supercross circles. Some of the moto head magazines literally characterized the '98 YZ motor as having a mellow powerband that would better suit an enduro bike. We couldn't agree more, and if you think that this sounds a lot like the typical West Coast "enduro bike" write-up, then you've hit the nail on the head. Fact is, the '98 YZ250 might be the most "enduroized" motocrosser we've ridden in recent years. Plush suspension action at both ends soaks up abrupt hits like logs and holes without deflection. Yet there's still plenty of bottoming resistance for trail whoops or drop-offs. On the go side, in stock trim the motor exhibits little of the midrange hit typically associated with 250 motocrossers. Instead you'll find strong, smooth, controllable power delivery that'll easily go ballistic with a stab of the clutch lever, if that's your pleasure. Otherwise, it's good useable woods motivation right out of the box.

### '98 Changes

In the grand scheme of things, 1998 is an update year for the quarter liter YZ. On the powerplant side, the near square (68mm X 68.5mm) '98 mill boasts new port timing, a modified cylinder head design (for higher compression), new power valve shape and actuation curve, as well as revised ignition specs. A new pipe and associated brass within the 38mm Keihin D slide carburetor round out the powerplant changes. The inverted 46mm KYB fork has enough inter-

nal changes to be called "new" in press releases and uses a 0.43kg/mm spring. Ergonomically, the perennial smallish YZ has been stretched with a taller saddle and elevated handlebar bend in order to make it more suitable to larger riders. In all, the '98 YZ250 has undergone a host of well thought-out refinements to an already proven design that has been in production for quite a number of years now.

### Riding Impressions

What bodes worse for woods racers and trail riders? Narrow, abrupt motocross powerband or stiff, unforgiving stock suspension action? Truth is, neither is the quick way around the A loop, as either deficiency is likely to precipitate a detour to the emergency room. Fortunately, the '98 YZ250 exhibits neither of these traits. Excellent out-of-the-box suspension is very responsive to small woods obstacles. It

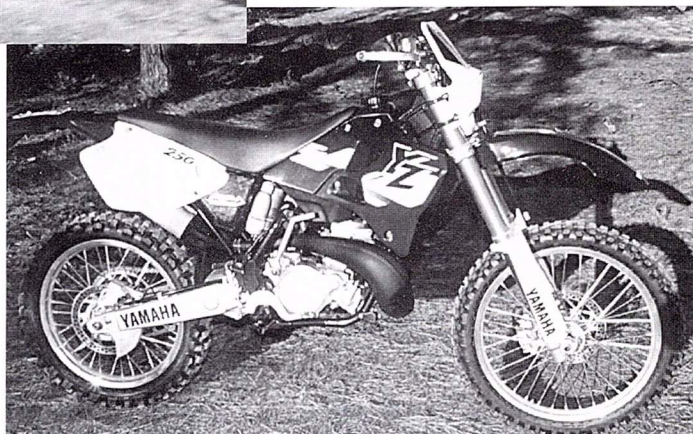


*Be it a YZ or a WR, Yamaha's 250 has always been a potent yet rideable eastern woods bike. The '98 YZ250 has been derided for its "mellow" MX power, but it's just perfect for the tight trails.*

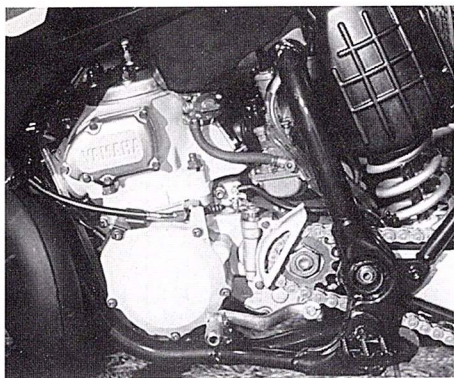
and air chamber variables. Spring rates seem right, and surprisingly, even the stock clicker settings were very close to what was ultimately settled upon, listed in the accompanying table. All suspension adjustments were made starting from the fully in (CW) position (maximum damping) and counted while turning out respective adjuster screws out (CCW). We should also note that the bike was tested in South Jersey mid-winter sand conditions.

The '98 YZ250 motor provides a gratu-

proved well suited to soaking up small sharp spikes like roots, logs, rocks and braking/acceleration bumps and avoided deflections off wet angled trail obstacles. Big bumps and higher speeds weren't a problem either as the Kayaba suspenders felt well balanced and confidence inspiring. All this without even messing with fork oil







Adding a lighting coil ignition to the YZ is not difficult, and there are many choices of products. We installed a replacement stator from Steahly.

itous off-road power delivery that should suit Expert and Novice alike. In stock trim, it provides a decent bottom end with the slightest of midrange hit, not abrupt enough to make it a handful though. There's plenty of top end run-out and power available anywhere at the stab of the light-pulling clutch. Stock jetting (#172 main jet; #48 pilot jet; needle clip in the center (#3) slot and air screw 1 3/4 turns out) was found to be in the hunt, but, not unexpectedly, a bit on the fat side, especially in warmer temperatures (over 50 degrees). As a start, we leaned out the pilot (to a 45). We tried raising the needle, but that led to detonation/overheating troubles when the motor was getting abused in the tight, so it got changed back to the middle (#3 slot). In this state of tune it doesn't foul any plugs, however, it still seemed a little spoozy. On recommendation of B&B Yamaha in Pennsylvania, we

changed to a #50 pilot, air screw at 1.5, 170 main, and stock needle at the second groove from the top. With these settings the stock bike ripped.

We did get the opportunity to slap on an FMF Fatty (torque) pipe and Power Core silencer. These bolt-on upgrades made a tangible difference in power delivery, smoothing out the little mid range hit there was and providing more go right off the bottom. It's funny, but getting off the FMF equipped YZ had several riders saying KTM-like power; sort of a Euro-clone with blue plastic. Nice power. With the FMF pipe, we ran the stock needle position and main jet, with the air screw just one turn out, and the bike was happy.

Stock gearing (14/49) and a five speed transmission proved okay for South Jersey, however, in really tight places, first and second gears proved a bit tall. The stock chain is mega-wimpy and stretched like overstressed Spandex. This is kind of scary, because all that protects the vulnerable Yamaha cases from a thrown chain is a cheap little stamped sheet metal bracket that wouldn't stand up to even the slightest obstruction. Best advice is to replace the final drive with a reputable O-ring chain and seek out or construct some sort of improved countershaft sprocket chain guide.

A negative with any MXer is accessory power, and the YZ is no exception. We miss a lighting coil as it impedes our night excursions and/or late returns to the truck. A salvage ignition from a late model WR250 would fit the '98 YZ250, however that entails the expensive proposition of replacing the entire ignition system, including sta-



The stock tank offers acceptable range for enduros, but for long rides and peace of mind a bigger tank is necessary. This 3.5 gallon model is from IMS.

tor plate, flywheel, and ignition box/coil. Not much better, an E-line lighting coil costs near \$400. The cheapest option that we located was a replacement stator coil assembly sold by Steahly Off Road Products. The Steahly lighting kit replaces the stock stator coil with one that handles both ignition and lighting chores, providing a 35 watt output. It bolts onto your existing stator plate and costs a little under \$160. The Steahly lighting kit can be ordered from your dealer or directly from Steahly products at (800)800-2363.

Another inherent MXer problem we dealt with was fuel capacity. The stock two-plus gallon fuel cell and thrifty YZ motor is probably good for something in the 45 mile range, depending on how happy your right hand is. Not bad for an MXer. However, with an add-on IMS 3.5 gallon tank the YZ range

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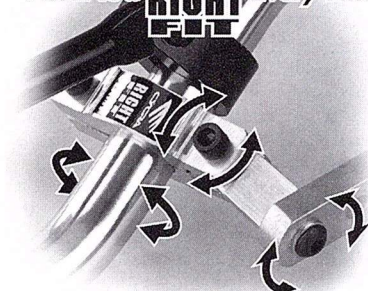


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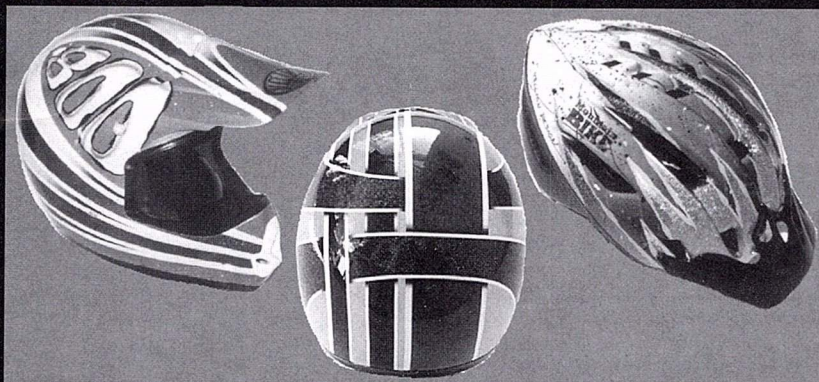
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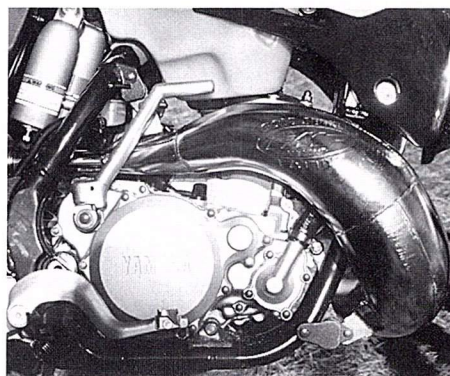
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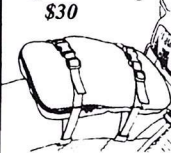
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was extended considerably. The IMS equipped YZ had no trouble keeping up with the true enduro bikes we rode with, providing a near 70 mile range without being too girly. We're also testing a pretty blue tank from Cycra, and will report on it in a later issue.

A perennial small rider's bike, the '98 YZ250 is plenty comfortable for taller riders too, benefiting from a higher seat height and handlebar bend (rise). The oddball YZ handlebar bend has been altered on the '98 bike, more closely resembling mainstream handlebars, however a replacement Renthal bar was slapped on anyway, providing better strength and the familiar CR bend. Of course, the bars were cut down to the obligatory 30" width. YZ controls are all top quality and intuitive. The light pull clutch was welcomed, although clutch adjustment suffered some as the plates heated up. In our limited testing thus far, braking components proved admirable and pad wear good. However, the stock intermediate terrain Dunlop rubber, a K695 (19") rear and K490 front tires are known marginal performers in South Jersey sand and mud, though some like them in rocks.

The suggested retail price of \$5,599 surely stings a little, especially when considering additional aftermarket costs associated with making the YZ250 woods capable and enduro legal. Further tilting the scales are all of the registration hassles associated with MX bikes—ugh!. However, if you can cut yourself a sweet deal and live in a non-Gestapo state (and/or know how to jump through applicable motor vehicle registration hoops), then the YZ250 might well be your ticket to the podium for '98. And with that, you'll have all of those other guys in your class seeing blue for a change. □



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- Riders must wear eye protection throughout the whole enduro.
- All bikes must have a valid motorcycle registration, liability insurance, and a USFS approved spark arrestor.

#### Course Information:

- A gas truck will be provided for two gas stops. Riders will need two cans.

Note to Pit Crews: There is no fuel available in the immediate area of the enduro. Get fuel before you get to the event.

- There will be a pre-course inspection and a secret inspection during the enduro. Riders must carry drivers license, registration, and insurance cards and present them at both inspection points.
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| <input type="checkbox"/> AA                  | <input type="checkbox"/> A                      | <input type="checkbox"/> B | <input type="checkbox"/> C |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (40+) A-B    | <input type="checkbox"/> Super Senior (50+) A-B |                            |                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four Stroke A-B-C   | <input type="checkbox"/> Women                  |                            |                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran (30+) A-B-C | <input type="checkbox"/> Masters (60+)          |                            |                            |

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# Cycra Handguards, SRC Vital Drink System

By Mark Uth

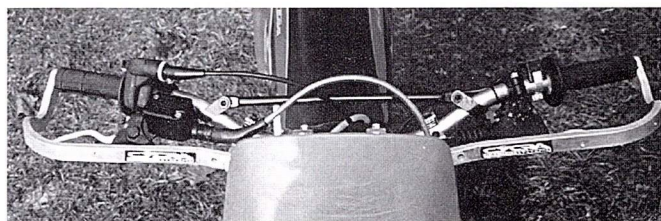
## Cycra Pro Bend Alloy Hand guards and Plastic Shields Brush Deflectors

Choosing hand guards is a personal decision affected as much by rider idiosyncrasies as bike and terrain demands. For years, we've seen plenty of top riders show up at starting lines with unusual hand guard configurations to suit these preferences. One of the more popular modifications has been changing the bar end mounting configuration of aluminum hand guards, effectively repositioning the bar end mounting to reduce contact and interference with the hand on the extreme outside of the grip. Unfortunately, this was most often accomplished by the sawing and TIG welding of an otherwise perfectly serviceable hand guard.

No doubt the guys at Cycra Racing Systems observed the same thing, and as a result, came up with the Pro Bend Alloy Hand guard. Made from aircraft grade aluminum, the Pro Bend hand guard employs a unique bend on the outside of the guard in order to change the bar-end mounting configuration. The result is a hand guard that offers less interference with the outside of the riders hand, allowing hand positioning further out on the end of the bar, and providing extra leverage when needed. While still providing maximum protection needed

in tight timberland, the Pro Bend configuration itself opens up a host of different mounting configurations, permitting tailoring to rider preference. Skeptical at first, we'll have to admit that the odd shape really grows on you and we've yet to smash our knuckles anyplace we didn't deserve it.

Not stopping there, the Pro Bend hand guard also comes with top notch mounting hardware in order to ensure effective, secure mounting. The most common cause of hand guard problems is improper mounting, leading to loosening or even failure. Getting hand guards properly mounted can be a daunting task, a repeated process of careful bending and refitting to ensure tight, gapless connections at the bar end and triple clamp, all the while avoiding the interference of levers, controls and other handlebar mounted equipment. Again, those observant Cycra guys had a solution. Noting that even the trickiest, top quality hand guard isn't worth a damn if it's not properly mounted,



the Pro Bend hand guard kit comes with an innovative handlebar clamping system and standard aluminum bar end mountings, similar to those pioneered by WER, MSR, et. al. The unique bar clamp, aptly named the Right Fit Clamp provides a mounting system with tri-axial freedom (as opposed to the two way adjustments common to all other hand guards). What this boils down to is a really secure inner clamp mounting without a lot of bending. It's plenty stout and you'll not find an easier mounting alloy hand

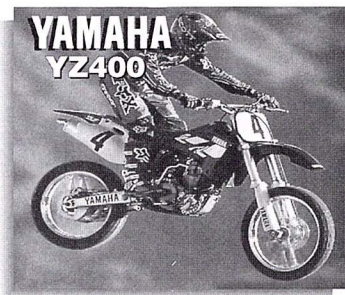
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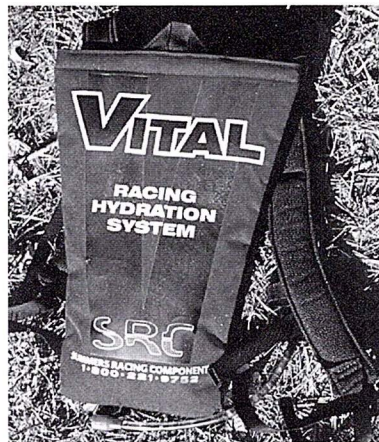
Rounding out Cycra's foray into hand protection, matching plastic brush deflectors are sold to provide protection against smaller branches and the elements. While mounting up nicely, and looking good, we were disappointed with the brittle plastic compound used. In short order, both Cycra Brush Deflectors were cracked and broken, despite use in mild fall temperatures. A more compliant plastic compound, like the Enduro Engineering deflectors, is the ticket in the unforgiving stick farms that we typically ride in. A set of Cycra Brush Deflectors retail for \$29.95, and we'd suggest you don't hit anything with them. Conversely, the Pro Bend Alloy Hand guard is top quality equipment and as such commands a substantial price, retailing for \$74.95 for conventional handlebars and \$84.95 for Pro Taper applications. This might seem high when compared to generic \$30-\$40 alloy hand guard prices, however, these don't account for the added value of the improved mounting hardware, as the bar ends and Right Fit Clamp would sell separately for \$20-\$30 each. As such, \$75 for a set of hand guards doesn't seem too bad. If you're not sold on the Pro Bend, Cycra also markets a conventional bend option called the Series One Alloy Hand guard. The Series One hand guard includes the same mounting hardware as the Pro Bend and, at \$49.95, is no doubt the bargain of the lot. Cycra hand guards and other equipment can be ordered through your local dealer or directly from Cycra Racing Systems, 5742 Westbourne Ave., Columbus, OH 43213. Telephone information is willing provided at

(614)866-9662 while orders or requests for their free catalog can be made at (800)770-2259.

#### SRC Vital Drink System

Scott Summers knows a little about race endurance. One of the problems he's cited in his preferred GNCC format is the amount of liquids that need be consumed in a three hour event. The old adage, coined by Camelbak, "hydrate or die" couldn't be more apt. The problem was two fold. First, Summers found himself easily consuming the two quarts capacity carried by even the largest drink systems. Additionally, once empty, replenishing many drink systems can be a tedious and cumbersome process, adding precious seconds to hasty pit stops. This wasn't the ticket for the multi-time champ, hence the development of the SRC Vital Drink System (VDS from here on in).

To overcome problems associated with existing drink systems, the VDS holds one third more volume than conventional systems, a full three quarts. The insulated tapered pouch keeps liquids cooler and makes bladder changes faster and easier, saving time in the pits. A tough cordura nylon shell and high quality craftsmanship are made to stand up to the rigors of riding, racing and repeated washings. To support the extra weight of the increased capacity, a well designed harness assembly with wide,



padded shoulder straps and a quick-release chest strap distribute weight more evenly and avoid interference with arm/shoulder movement, maximizing rider comfort. The larger capacity makes for a significantly flatter bladder profile as well, especially when partially filled, allowing the VDS to be more easily worn beneath riding jackets and/or chest protectors. Its ergonomic shape closely con-

forms to the shape of the body, reducing the chance of it being snagged by passing tree limbs and branches, a common fault of solid bottle drink systems. We've worn the VDS for hundreds of miles of trail riding and found it to be so comfortable that you'll literally forget you're wearing it.

SRC products can be had via your local dealer or directly at SRC, P.O. Box 206, Carrollton, Kentucky 41008, (800)221-9572. At \$99.95, the Vital Drink System sells for more than its direct competitor, the original Camelbak (two quart) and Halfbak (one quart) drink systems which retail in the \$30-\$40 price range. However, if it turns out to be the last piece of the championship puzzle, then it's no doubt a small price to pay. □



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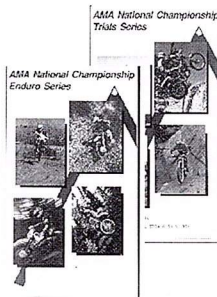
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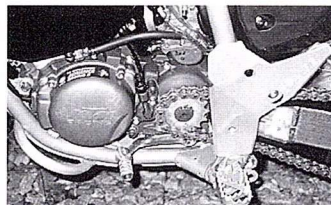
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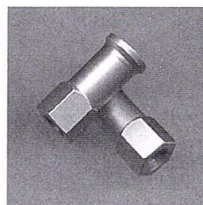
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# Trail Rider TOOLBOX

By Mark Uth

## Plugging Away

A cardinal rule learned early during this motorcycling affliction of mine was to never venture into the woods without a spare spark plug and functional plug wrench. Forged during a time when piston port motors fouled plugs like clockwork, rest assured that even today's digital, solid state, reed-inducted rocket sleds are just as hard to push back to the truck. I'm sure there's a Murphy's corollary in here somewhere, perhaps "the less likely you are to foul a plug, the further from the truck you'll be when it eventually happens."

For the most part spark plugs are pretty much fit and forget hardware, the only time any attention is paid is during purchasing or when stricken on the trail. However, in spite of their inherent simplicity, spark plug choices do

offer the tuner a means of optimizing motor performance for a given duty cycle and engine operational condition.

There are a handful of companies that manufacture plugs that'll fit your scooter, although NGK is by far the most popular choice, mainly because of the relationship between their place of manufacture (Japan) and their resulting kinship with most motorcycle OEMs. That's not to say that they don't make a fine plug, because they do, however, the \$2.50-\$3.00 cost per plug is considerably more than you'd pay for comparable domestically produced ones. We've used plugs manufactured by AC, Bosch, Champion, et. al, in different bikes at various times, all with good results.

However, there's a two part problem that generally impedes brand swapping. First, it's hard to match up plugs sold by other manufacturers because there's no standard spark plug designation system within the industry. As a result, it's nearly impossible to find two plugs that are exactly alike, let alone figure it out with any degree of assuredness. Secondly, it's just plain difficult to find shops that carry alternate plugs for motorcycle applications, as most dealers carry OEM replacement plugs which are almost universally NGKs. Conversely, in automotive parts stores there's not much demand for motorcycle plugs, so they don't get stocked. Were you to locate a shop that stocks Champion or AC brand plugs, or one that is willing to order a box for you, a dollar or more savings per plug would be likely. Of course, this assumes you could figure out what plug to order in the first place.

While there's no standard plug designation system, there are considerable hard similarities among plugs made by various manufacturers. Plugs are differentiated by three major characteristics: thread size (diameter), thread reach, and heat range. Electrode shape and material are another factor that differentiates plugs, although harder to compare among different brands. There are a plethora of divergent combinations among the various manufacturers, with virtually no two being alike. Regarding size, a 14mm thread size with a 3/4" reach is standard for today's two stroke motorcycles. Older two strokes, predominantly air cooled bikes with corresponding thinner heads, used a 14mm thread size with a shorter reach while four stroke bikes generally use a 10mm or 12mm thread size, depending upon head design and space constraints.

### Heat Range

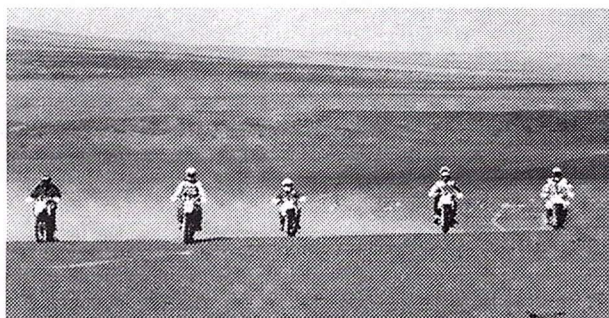
Naturally, thread size and reach are determined by the engine's designer, and can't be changed (without dire consequences). As a result, the most important decision in choosing a spark plug is heat range. Not surprisingly, engine design characteristics and its intended engine service envelope determines the most effective plug heat range. Like most engineering decisions, however, OEM plug choices are often a compromise, either a suitable plug for average conditions or simply making the best choice between two duty cycle extremes. Since you as a rider know better how your bike gets ridden, it's possible that a non-standard plug heat range might better suit specific riding conditions.

It's not uncommon for the novice tuner to



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equate a plug's heat range to spark intensity. This would be a mistake. In actuality, the heat range is a measure of a plug's ability to dissipate the heat of combustion. Retaining or dissipating heat affects plug electrode temperatures and subsequent plug/combustion performance. Consequently, a higher heat range means that the plug in question retains heat (or, if you prefer, dissipates heat slower) making for higher plug electrode temperatures. This can be good, because it fights deposits that can cause fouling. However, in extreme cases it can also lead to pre-ignition as the incoming fuel-air charge is ignited by the hot plug electrode.

Higher heat range plugs are often used in engines that see light loading, short term use, and/or low speeds (e.g., lawnmowers, gas driven generators, etc.). Inversely, lower heat range plugs dissipate heat faster and thus run cooler, a good thing in racing applications and other motors that get run hard. Plugs with a colder than ideal heat range have the tendency to accumulate unburned combustion byproducts (e.g., soot, carbon, oil, etc.) which eventually spawns premature fouling. Colder plugs are generally used in engines that see more demanding use; high speeds, heavy loading, long and/or continuous hard use. As you might expect, most plugs used in motorcycles tend to be in the colder ranges.

Other conventions find four-stroke motorcycles typically running hotter plugs than two-strokes, while big bore (open class) mounts tend to run hotter plugs than buzz bombs (80cc MXers). When fiddling with plug heat range some caution is in order. Rarely have we seen tuners effectively deviating more than a

Plug	Sample Number	Thread Size (Position)	Heat Range, Cold to Hot (Position)	Reach/Specialty (Position)
AC	MC44XL	(1st #) - 10=10mm, 12=12mm, 4=14mm	(2nd #) - range: 0-9 #4 mid-range	(Prefix) - MC=MC application; (Suffix) - XL=¾" (for 14mm)
Bosch	W16ORT	(1st ltr) - U=10mm X=12mm, W=14mm	(#) - range: 340-20 #145 mid-range	(Suffix) - R=resistor
Champion	N3G	(1st ltr) - Z=10mm (x.492"), R=12mm (x ¾"), N=14mm (x ¾")	(#) - range: 1-25 (for automotive, marine, MC, etc. applications)	(Suffix) - C=standard electrode; G=precious metal electrode
NGK	B8ES	(1st ltr) - C=10mm, D=12mm, B=14mm	(#) - range: 14-2 #8 mid-range	(Prefix) - R=resistor, P=protruding electrode; (Suffix) - E=¾", H=½", S=std electrode; G, V=precious metal electrode

step or two from the OEM heat range. Should that prove necessary then other problems probably abound, most likely jetting and/or overall motor health.

It was originally intended to give a full explanation of various manufacturers' plug identification schemes herein, but space limitations have precluded it. A comprehensive list of different manufactured plug designations can be found in some aftermarket bike repair manuals, specifically those published by Clymer Publications, (913)541-6763. In the TR library, we've copies of several Clymer Vintage Collection Series manuals, each of which devotes several pages to various plug manufacturer designations. Very detailed, and near one hundred percent complete. In lieu of regurgitating that information, we've compiled an abridged table of plug designations in the table that accompanies this story.

#### Electrode Gap

The gap formed between center electrode and ground electrode (arm) is commonly referred to as the spark plug gap. Plug gap convention is usually something around 0.025" ±0.002" (approximately 0.6mm-0.7mm). Plug gap is adjusted by carefully bending the ground electrode and measuring the changing

distance between the two electrodes using a feeler gage or plug gapping tool. The shape and material of a plug's electrodes affects spark characteristics as well. With all plugs, normal usage has a tendency to round off the electrodes' edges. Careful dressing of the electrodes, followed by re-gapping allows most plugs to be returned to service.

While we've had great success over the years cleaning and reusing spark plugs, we'd

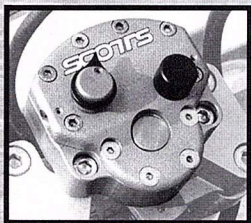
recommend against fooling around with used plugs whenever racing. Some high performance plugs use a thinner center electrode that may be made from a precious metal such as platinum, palladium or gold. The thinner electrode is alleged to focus spark better while the precious metals offer greater electrical conductivity. Similarly, some specialty plugs (e.g., Splitfire) use multiple or odd configuration ground electrodes, again alleged to improve spark or combat fouling.

Truth is, with a normally functioning ignition system and proper gap, a standard electrode plug doesn't have much trouble producing a spark. Spark initiation does however become more demanding as the engine (spark plug) gets hotter, the air (plug electrode) gap is widened and/or higher compression pressures realized. Highest compression pressures occur during large throttle openings and relatively slow engine speeds, thus ignition problems, due to weak spark generation, most often manifest themselves as a spark/engine miss during maximum acceleration. The bottom line, poor plug life or performance is often a harbinger for other more serious mechanical problems. Find the problems and fix them, and your plug will do its job happily for a good long time. □

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# TM 250

Far flung fall fling

By Charlie Williams

**M**iles baby, that's what riding is about. Covering ground; and I've sure done that this fall while testing this TM 250. Let me recite some facts for a while, then I'll get on with the riding. First off, TM is a small Italian motorcycle company which has been around since (about) 1972. They are famous for building go-cart engines and little Six Day bikes (80cc). Only in the last few years (since 94) has TM started producing 250cc size bikes, but they are not lacking in experience.

Now, how can building go-cart motors teach you how to build dirt bike engines? Well, that's where the experience comes in. They have experience at building racing motors that put out gobs more power than we need at wildly high RPM, requiring perfect balance and component harmony. Okay, you say, they have the technical skills but the bolt holes will never line up. Look, experience steps in again. Instead of trying to redesign the mouse trap they pretty much copied a 250 Honda motor. They didn't copy it exactly, because they built their own, only better, using the same hands that produce those exotic cart motors. Instead of robots and bean counters building your bike, you have skilled craftsmen robbing all Honda's rudimentary designs and building it better.

Better quality material and better craftsmanship makes a better mouse trap. See, the 250 Honda is a great motor to copy because Honda already stole all the good ideas. Besides, the 250 Honda motor is about what the world needs, only the TM is better, in my opinion, because if you can build an engine from scratch, you can certainly jet it, port it, fly-wheel it to make it run just like we woods riders need. See the advantages of having enough experience not to be afraid to copy some one else's experience?

Rumor has it a 250 Honda piston will fit, along with clutch and basket and many other parts. I'm afraid I can't confirm these tales because, well, I haven't needed a piston and when it finally came time to re-plate the clutch the bike's actual owner put it to me like this:

"Yes Charlie, that Honda clutch might work just fine, but would you want me to put Japanese parts in your Volkswagen?"

At first I was mad but then I just started crying about all that good metal and all those communist fibers grinding around in my precious little type III. Long live the peoples car!

It turned out the TM clutch was four dollars cheaper anyhow, leaving me wondering what I had been thinking. But in an emergency, and I mean only in an emergency, some of the Japanese parts could be used.

If any readers could confirm this that would be great, but me, I only recommend buying your parts from an authorized TM dealer. On the subject of buying parts, I haven't really had to buy any parts to speak of, the clutch was in stock at my dealer Great Dave's and was around \$200 bucks. That was for the fiber plates, new steel plates (which I



*My favorite picture—my favorite subject. You have to be confident and comfortable on a bike to ride like this, and the TM makes you comfortable.*

didn't see necessary) and new springs.

The clutch basket itself was pretty grooved up. Now, factory guys would just get a new basket, but they are expensive. A Honda basket is just as pricey. Being a mooch, instead of buying a new basket I had my bestest buddy Mark Todd put it in a milling machine and faced all the tangs back an equal amount, and this should work fine for a while. It seems that they wear faster after doing this though. Mark thought \$40 would be about what a small machine shop should charge for this type of work.

Sprockets were on the shelf at Great Dave's



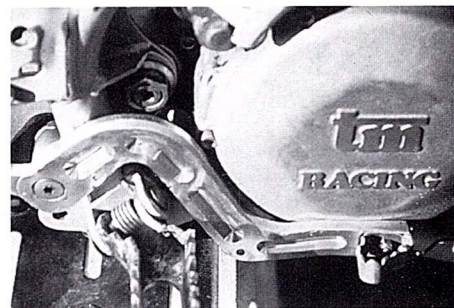
*Our test bike was everywhere, and it has a jillion miles on it. But, it's still going strong, still fast and potent.*

and I don't remember them being extra expensive. Chains? Universal, but I've had good luck with the Moose O-ring. Brakes? Brembo, just like what's on the KTM, so pads and parts can be found everywhere. Suspension? Marzocchi/Ohlins, the best, and technicians on every corner. Cables? You mean cable. Just the one, throttle cable. The clutch is hydraulic. I mean the clutch cable has been replaced with a hydraulic system similar to your front brake system. You still have the tension of the clutch spring when operating the clutch, so it's not totally magic, not yet anyhow, but it is way better than that stout piece of cable through a plastic tube technology we had. The play remains the same, I mean the lever is adjustable to your favorite spot and stays there. Both the clutch lever reservoir and the front brake lever reservoir are Brembo and should be available through TM or KTM in emergencies.

All the plastic is supplied by Acerbis and is readily available. The bars of course are aluminum, and I have yet to ruin them so they must be tough. Pro tapers will mount easily without having to replace the top clamp, which is a work of art. The bars are mounted in these little holders that can be adjusted forward or backward changing the location of the bars by over an inch. Wheel bearings were available

at bearing supply warehouses and when I was riding in Colorado we replaced one with parts bought at an auto parts store and a couple of thick washers to make up the difference. Again this is not recommended in the TM owners guide, but a little improvising saved a week of riding.

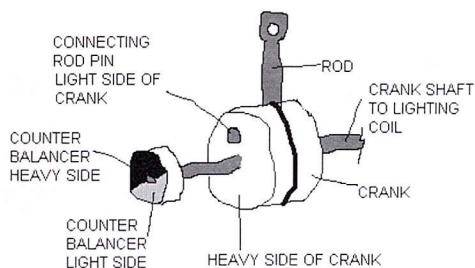
So we all agree that the TM may cost a little more than other bikes, but you're not buying a six thousand dollar motorcycle to save money, right? Not everybody wants the cheapest thing they can roll off the assembly line. You don't buy the cheapest shoes do you? The cheapest jeans? The



*The brake pedal is just one of a gang of machined parts that add to the quality feel of the TM.*

cheapest food? No, in most cases you buy what you want and price is secondary. Cheap is cheap for a reason, and expensive is so much cooler than cheap. Ever wonder why factory riders were compensated with a garage full of bikes? It was the cheapest thing the factory could bargain with. Scott Summers is allotted a dozen XR's a year, Chris Smith is given one TM. Parts may be more expensive





Engineering drawing of the function of the counter-balancer, simplified.

too, but if they are built stronger and last longer, which is a better value?

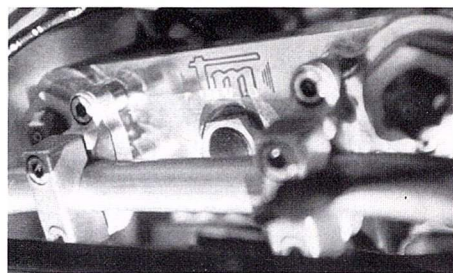
I want to tell you about the top end on the 250 I've been riding. The piston and rings have lasted a very long time. I can't say for sure how many miles it has on it, but in the last 8 weeks I've put over a thousand miles on the bike, and this bike was the worn out ugly duckling when I got it from Great Dave's. All the other shop-sponsored riders got '97's when they came out, and I got the "hand me down" '96 that was used when Great Dave got it. This bike had been raced in eight national enduros under the direction of Don Knight and Knight's Cycle out of Mississippi before Great Dave even got it as a demo bike. Then Great Dave let every yahoo in Indiana ride and race the thing before I was finally able to pirate it away and keep it in my own garage, where maintenance totally stopped.

This bike has the miles on it. Over 4,000 I guesstimate, all on the original top end. Sure it rattles when you get it up to 13,500 feet running on 87 octane gas mixed by eye at the quickie mart, but there was still plenty of motor to cruise along. When you get it back closer to sea level and properly jet it and top

it off with good two-cycle oil and race gas the bike rips. On a couple of occasions the bike has wanted to jump right out from underneath me. Straight forwards, not over backwards, leaving me sitting on the fender laying on the seat, chin on the 2.3 gallon Acerbis plastic gas tank. "Peppy" I think is the word I want to use.

Just the other day we were riding and I was going to conquer this steep creek bank. It is one of those that was straight up with a lip at the top, but I know I can make it. This day I hadn't given myself a long enough run to get totally under control, so when I hit the gas I was just a little off. Well, the bike shot out from underneath me again and straight up the wall and didn't stop until it was 15 feet off the ground, it slowly turned and started back to earth and landed upside down on the bars mashing them flat. Yes I was okay, I was laying on my stomach in the creek facing the other direction, but the bike was on top of the hill. Good power. At the last Mid-South race the gang went to, Machino and Sampson beat every body to the first turn on their '97 250 TMs. They also finished like third overall for John Machino, and about seventh for Mike Sampson. Doug Blackwell won this event and he can ride at the National level.

For some simple and minor reasons I like the '96 better than the '97's I've ridden. First off, I like the 45mm Marzocchi forks better than the 50s. Now Great Dave saw there were problems in the 50s on the bikes he owns, and took six pairs to a local guy who is purported to know suspension. This shop does not advertise in Trail Rider so you won't know who I'm talking about. I can't recommend him after the dealings Great Dave experienced, not to mention my own horror stories. Anyhow, after several weeks and hundreds of dollars over the estimate, they claim to have the 50s working good. The story goes that none of the forks



How's that for a triple clamp? Beautiful, no?

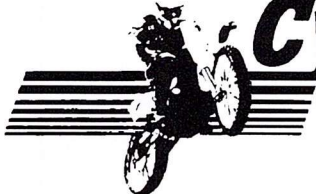
were the same inside, except they were full of trash from the factory. This problem goes back to the Marzocchi factory and TM claims to have cured this problem on the 1998's by offering the Paoli conventional forks on the enduros, and Paoli upside down for the moto-crossers.

Perhaps a more serious flaw between the '96 moto version and '97 enduro model that I have had experience with, is with the lighting coil. The '96 does not have the lighting coil, nor does it have the extra flywheel weight that comes with the lighting coil. Theory has it that a heavy flywheel makes a motor more tractable and less likely to stall at low RPM, but I don't think it works on the TM. I feel it just confuses the motor. Especially under quick acceleration, the flywheel slows the RPM build up enough that it feels like there is a lag between the throttle and the motor. Take it off and the motor revs more quickly and is by no means pipey or easy to stall.

This is due to the counter balancer built into the motor. Smooth tractable power is what I want and I'm totally satisfied with the motocross set up. The counter balancer is the secret to its smooth power, and it will chug way down low. Although no one could accurately explain the TM counter balancer, I was

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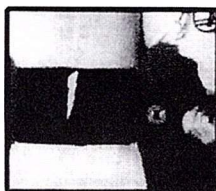
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- Kevin Hines



## KEV-CO/STUBBS RACING

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*Phil from Great Dave's was our patron for this test, and he's the TM guru in Indianapolis.*

able to see pictures of a Honda motor with a balancer. It is not magic, it is simply an extra wheel mounted on the end of the crank that is weighted on one side. Its weight is exactly opposite as the weight in the crank, and when they spin their spinning mass off sets one another, for extra smooth power delivery. Drew Smith agreed that in theory the counter balancer acts like a heavier flywheel, but an "extra smart one." On top of the motor confusion caused by the lighting coil, it is an after-thought item. It is just hung out on the end of the crank shaft and you need a special side case to house it, then the stock shifter won't work so it winds up with a short little shifter you can't reach with your foot. Trash all that lighting coil stuff, put the correct shifter on it and use batteries to power the lights. You will be much happier.

The Enduro bikes come with a centerstand, which is enough reason to buy a TM. Centerstands rule, for no more weight than they add they more than make up for it in convenience and cool.

Of course all the components on the TM are top notch but it's the hubs and the triple clamps and the brake pedal where the "hand built" really shows. All these items are machined out of solid blocks of aluminum at the TM factory, and they really stand apart from the cast components on lesser machines. The brake pedal is strong as hell, and when I did bend it, it was easy enough to take off and lay on a flat surface and pound it back straight with a hammer. I tore the detachable tip off the brake and had a real one welded on in its place. The shifter got all twisted up in a series of outings, but did not break. I'm afraid to bend on it too much until I know I have a new one to replace it with. My friend Mark claims the shifter is of the material that can be welded good as new but I've learned to live with the twisted shifter. A new one costs \$60.

Enough about parts, let's talk about the whole package. First off, people stop and stare and ask what kind of bike it is. You tell them "TM" and they correct you with "KTM". "No, TM." Then they think it's an old 185 Suzuki. "No, TM from a small Italian company." They usually walk away confused, but some guys just drool over them, and why not? They are some of the nicest, most exotic bikes available to us.

It is no secret that I am biased towards European bikes and the way they handle. The TM is easily the best handling bike I've ever ridden, straight line stability like a falling safe. Turns with or without a berm. It kind of steers from the rear wheel, leaving the front wheel to act like a rudder happily skimming over bumps that would grab the front wheel on yel-

# B & B Sales & Service

## YAMAHA

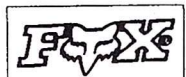
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low machines. Sure you can stuff it in a berm and come exploding out the other side, but the bike was built for grass track special tests and can turn right over the top of the berm and not even notice it.

This is not a follow the groove bike, it yearns to take the alternate line out in the rough stuff. Peterhansel would like this bike for this reason. But I like it for going straight, none of that twitchy front end like on Japanese bikes waiting to be shot off the trail at the smallest deflection. This bike runs straight. On two different occasions I was riding along and the front wheel twisted to the stop but the bike continued to go straight. This happened twice, on any other bike I would have eaten it right there. The front wheel does not run up the sides of ruts and is never deflected far off course.

I'm not a jumper so I can't tell you how the suspension works under full moto load, but we could ask Alex Puzar, (#2 World Championship motocross 125 class). He could tell us about Grand Prix jumps. There was a test in Dirt Bike with the SMP jump team. The TM 125 received low marks in the test but who cares, we don't care what the SMP (Itton) jump team thinks, and we really don't care if these bikes can super bump or not. Super bump is over, woods rule.

Through the whoops at Loretta Lynn's the rear end worked without any glaring faults and the straight line stability inspired confidence. The Ohlins shock was originally valved by Knight's Cycle and I don't think it's been off the bike since. The linkage is just beginning to show a slight amount of play, one eighth inch or so. Better quality materials worked at closer tolerances make a longer lasting machine. Every time I rode the bike away from the truck I rode it back.

The 1998's are on their way but don't have a great deal of changes over the 96's. Paoli forks would be the biggest change. I talked to Kevin Hines about the Paoli forks, and here again, we have better quality stuff than what is normally offered. According to Kevin the Paoli conventional are very similar to the 1985 KX250 forks that were famous for their performance. Paoli may have copied the drawings, but again they used better stuff. First off, the slider leg is a three-piece leg. The bottom part where the axle goes through is forged aluminum, this threads onto a solid aluminum tube for the leg itself, then the top part (where the seal rides) is still another part. This is where the Paoli is ahead of everyone else. Somehow the seal "floats" up and down, thus reducing the "stiction" found on cheaper forks.

Both legs contain compression and rebound damping, unlike the Marzocchi with one leg compression and one leg rebound. I guess it is a lot cheaper to make the one leg compression and one leg rebound, but this system pumps up air so bad it is hard to get them consistent. I guess the Paoli forks don't pump up. The Paoli conventional have external adjustments, 30 clicks for compression, 28 clicks for rebound and 15mm external adjustability in preload. K. Hines told me "They work very nice." Don't be afraid, if your TM dealer should happen to be out of fork seals when you need them, Kawasaki and Yamaha both have seals that will fit the Paoli forks. Kevin assured me he could handle all repair and revalving, but the fork had so much adjustability he didn't do much of that work. Drew Smith also said he knew his way around the inside of the Paoli forks, so I'm not afraid of buying something nobody understands. TM has beefed up the frame in the steering head area, on the new bikes, but all the geometry remains the same. All the bikes get an oversized aluminum gas tank that makes it look even cooler. The 98's are to have smaller radiators for a narrower

# CELEBRATING

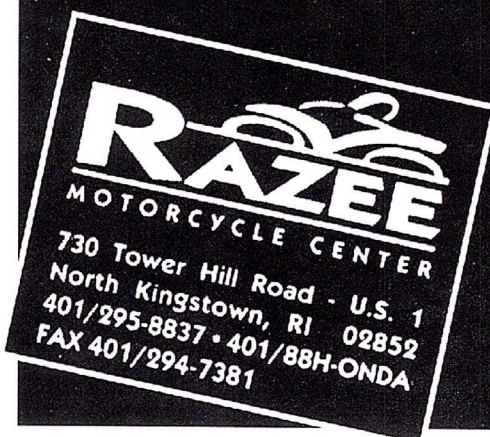
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profile. This makes me a little nervous. The bike I rode never boiled over, not even once, which was a big improvement over my steam powered 300 KTM.

I don't know a thing about port timing, gear ratios, power valves, none of that mechanical jargon, torque specifications, rake and trail, static sag, rebound valving, compression dampening, viscosity, boiling points. I'm a mechanical dunderhead. But I do know what I like and what I can adapt to. I know what I don't like and it's not all determined by what color something is or it's political connections. I like the TM motorcycles. I like the way they handle, I like the way they look, and I like them because they are very expensive. There is a certain vulgarity to owning the most expensive anything. Balls maybe; it's the same thing that allows me to grow stupid sideburns and a devil's goatee. Yeah, it takes balls to buy the most expensive.

A dedicated player enjoys extravagances and excess, and your toys should be no different. It takes cash if you are actually rolling the dice on the big table. Great Dave knows the shock value a few dollars can make and he fully enjoys owning the finest. Great Dave will quietly boast about being the ninth largest dealer in the world. You excitedly ask how many bikes he has sold and he just smiles and says "It's not how many you sold, it's how many you bought." Our sport needs more "Players" like Great Dave, and TM is extremely lucky to have a dealer with the view point Great Dave has of the bigger picture. On my own ego-stroking side of it, there is nothing cooler than being able to answer "No, this expensive, exotic erotic machine does not belong to me, it belongs to the shop I race for." Mortals drop to their knees and lick my always-clean boots. I don't wear a fancy watch or gold chains around my neck, my jewelry leans up against

the garage wall. I sat back and laughed when I re-read this. A big, fat, wealthy man's laugh, full of phlegm and food, Haaahaaa! See what an attitude that extra \$1,500 gives you? Haahaaahha, balls on your chin!

The TM is a kick ass motorcycle, and I recommend them highly. This is not cheap talk either, this was an honest test. See, Phil at Great Dave's has been my friend for a long time. He let me ride one of his bikes hoping I could mention his name in the magazine a few times, maybe promote his business and TM motorcycles. Yes, I'm guilty of accepting a bribe to get a bike to ride, but that's where it stopped. Great Dave did not hold me down and make me write only nice things nor was this one afternoon on a brand new bike under ideal conditions. No, this was a one year knock down drag out between me and the bike.

I apologize for being vague on many points. TM history was unknown by any English speaking people. TM does not publish a suggested dealer price list on parts, so to be fair with all the TM dealers parts prices were greatly exaggerated to cover anybody's mark up and all parts can be bought cheaper than these prices. Call your dealer. Great Dave's is my dealer, call him and thank him for letting me ride the bike and writing a fair test on it, 812-323-0081. Eric Koeller at Town and Country has been a great deal of help, 201-875-2111. Kevin Hines took his time to explain the Paolis and Drew Smith corroborated on explaining things. Gas Gas dealers can be a good source for parts for these bikes, but don't be afraid, for as exotic as these bikes are they are still pretty standardized and easy to work on.

This document has an average of 4.1 letters per word and is written at the 8.5 grade level. Please apologize to our Southern California readers if I'm throwing too hard. □

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*Mike Lafferty*

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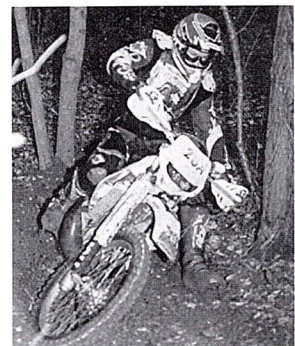
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# METEOR MOTORCYCLE CLUB PRESENTS

The 61st Running of The

## SANDY LANE ENDURO



**Sunday March 15th, 1998 Keytime--8:00 AM**

**Location: Interboro Gun Club, Route 563, Greenbank, N.J.**

**DRAWING DATE MARCH 6, 1998**



**Directions:** From PA. Take route 70 east to Route 72 (circle) south, right on route 563 to gun club.

From South Jersey, take route 30 east in Hammonton, bear left onto rte. 542 to gun club.

From North Jersey take route 206 south to route 38 east (diner & Wawa) make left at light, route 38 east, make right on Magnolia Road follow to 72 circle, south on 72 make right on route 563 to Greenbank. Follow arrows to start.

**Accommodations:** Plenty of free camping behind gun club. **NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES !!!**

Ramada Inn: Route 30 White Horse Pike, Hammonton, N.J. (609)- 561-5700 ;

**RIDER REQUIREMENTS:** All riders must have a valid motorcycle drivers license, registration and insurance card. All bikes must be fitted with a valid license plate (no cardboard plates), Headlight, Taillight, and Exhaust System equipped with a spark arrester, and must pass an AMA sound test. All entrants must have a current E.C.E.A. card. E.C.E.A. test will be given for new riders on Saturday only! There is no fee for the E.C.E.A. test. All entrants must be current members of the AMA. AMA applications will be avail. at sign-up

**Food:** Marshall's Pasta party blow out Saturday night. Sunday Breakfast and lunch served all day.

**Sign-up:** Saturday 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm---Sunday 6:00 am to start.

**Entry Information:** PRE-ENTRIES--\$35.00--POST-ENTRIES--\$40.00 Make checks payable to the: Meteor Motorcycle Club, and mail them to: 2111 Rosella Ave. Atco, N.J. 08004. Do not staple checks to entry forms. "A" & "B" riders entered with "C" will get "C" Numbers. We cannot guarantee groupings of riders.

**For Additional Info: (609)767-2023 Please limit calls between 7pm and 10pm. ask for Barry.**  
cut here-----cut here-----cut here

### RELEASE AND WAIVER OF INDEMNITY AGREEMENT, SANDY LANE ENDURO, 3/15/98

I hereby give up all my rights to sue or make any claim whatsoever against the American Motorcycle Club and its district organizations, the Meteor Motorcycle Club, the promoters, sponsors and all other persons, participants or organizations conducting or connected with this event for any injury to property or person I may suffer, including crippling injury or death, whether such injury arises while I am preparing for or participating in the event or while I am on the premises and, relying upon my own judgment and ability, assume all such risks of such of loss and hereby agree to reimburse all costs to those persons and organizations connected with this event for damages incurred as a result of my negligence.

In the event I am treated by emergency medical personnel at the event, I agree that the emergency medical personnel may release information on the nature of treatment and the extent of injury to Meteor Motorcycle Club representatives for the purpose of completing insurance and State Racing Commission accident reports.

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☐ Light (125cc) ☐ Medium Light (200cc) ☐ Medium (250cc) ☐ Heavy (251cc+)

☐ Masters (60+) ☐ Super Senior ( 50+)(A-B) ☐ Senior ( 40+ )(A-B) ☐ Veteran ( 30+ )(A-B-C)

☐ Four Stroke (A-B-C) ☐ Women ☐ Dual Sport (no points)

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\$30 Pre- Entry, \$35 Post, \$15 for all Super Seniors, Masters and Women

Starting position will be determined by a drawing on March 23rd.

**Location:** Warren Grove Firehouse, Warren Grove, NJ. Exit 67N on the Garden State Parkway, arrowed from Route 72 and Route 539.

**Trophies:** All Regular ECEA classes. C class trophies to 10 places. NETRA riders welcome!

**Lodging:** Plenty of primitive camping at the start. Some motels nearby, very close to Atlantic City.

**Food:** Lucille's restaurant will be open all weekend.

**Requirements:** All riders will be checked at sign-up for current registration, insurance card, and motorcycle license. If you don't have any of the above, you will not run. NETRA members and other district riders are welcome. **No one under 18 years of age will ride.**

**Sign-Up:** Will be open 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, and 6:30 a.m. on Sunday. Any entry received without rider class will be drawn with the C class. A & B riders stapled to a C rider will ride C numbers. Please use supplied garbage bags. **Gas will be back at start.**

**Information:** Call Dave Jobes, (609)758-8222 after 6:30 P.M.

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AMA No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

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Bike Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Displacement: \_\_\_\_\_

Check skill level and class below:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Four Stroke A-B-C   | <input type="checkbox"/> Women                  |                            |                            |
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I know the risks of danger to myself and my property while participating in the event and while upon the event premises and, relying on my own judgment and ability, assume all such risks of loss and hereby agree to reimburse all costs to those persons and organizations connected with this event for damages incurred as a result of my negligence.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle No. \_\_\_\_\_

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Parent/\_\_\_\_\_ signature (sign in ink)

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**SORRY! NO RIDERS UNDER 18 ALLOWED**



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**1995 KTM RXC 620** Special MINT Cond. This bike is for the short rider that wants a big bike. The suspension has been professionally modified to accommodate riders from 5' to 5'5". Rear pegs and rear rack kit, totally street legal titled in N.H., new Sidewinder sprockets w/Tsubaki o-ring chain, new Dunlop 490 front and 695 rear, DeVol skid plate, Acerbis Rally Guards, More info evenings, call Mark 603-356-0233.

**1996 KTM 250EXC** Fresh top end, mint cond., \$3900 obo. (609)692-2412.

**1986 Chevy Cube Van** 14 foot, 350 AT, fully set up for motorcycle racing. Benches, cabinets, vises, full electric w/Overhead lighting, tire rack, toolbox stand, 10-ton shop press, chrome wheels, new radials, low mileage, very good cond., asking \$5495. Call Al at Aktive Reeds, (610)262-1679.

**1996 Honda XR250** Revalved susp., excellent shape, ready to ride. New 1/97, \$3200. (401)397-6327.

**KTM Pipes** 1990-92 250/300 and 1993-97 250/300. Power comes on sooner, good low torque, soft hit, more over-rev. Chrome plated, free ground shipping. \$150 total. Z Racing, (714)449-1271.

**1995 KTM 300EXC** \$3000. Great bike, excellent in the woods. Needs nothing, ready to rage! Call (508)655-9087.

**1997 KTM 250EXC** Low miles, WER susp., \$3800. **1997 KTM 250EXC** WER susp., Bark Busters, lots of spare parts. Good condition, \$3100. **1991 Cobra Flagstaff** Sleeps six, sink, fridge, stove, great shape, \$1600. Call days, (609)327-0392, Rich.

**1996 Honda XR250** Revalved susp., stock motor, low hours, enduro ready. \$3000. (401)397-6327.

**1997 KTM 250EXC** Brand new, only 23 miles. Extras included, with a new single-rail trailer; both for \$5000. Serious inquiries only, eves. (609)971-7723.

**KTM Parts Inventory** 1985-97. Lots of parts, \$2000 obo., or will trade for dirt bike. I like Maicos and Euro bikes. Info or parts list, (304)486-5244.

**1976 Husqvarna 175** Cross Country Complete bike, needs repairs to run, have parts to fix. \$200, (609)785-1107.

**1980 Husqvarna 390CR** Black tank, good original cond., Ohlins rear shocks, \$695. **1981 Husqvarna 430CR** Red tank, good cond., runs very strong. Sidewinder chain & sprockets, Ohlins shock. \$795, (609)785-1107.

**1997 Kawasaki KLX300** New cond., all stock, ridden approx 500 miles, well maintained, NJ title & reg. \$3500, call (609)723-6034.

**1995 ATK 250LQ** Dunlops, pipe guard, revalved susp., hardly ridden, mint cond., \$2900 obo. (201)797-0188.

**1994 KTM 300MXC** Exc. cond., enduro ready, FMF pipe, ISDE S/A, Acerbis

guards, NJ title, only ridden one season. Asking \$2800, (609)863-1329.

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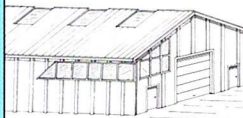
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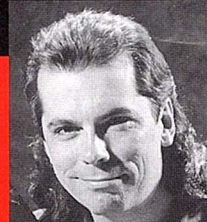
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# HERTFELDER

## RESULTS S.A.P.

**A**s I was reading an article about Lord Louis Mountbatten OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire), DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross), DSO (Distinguished Service Order) my mailman brought the result sheet from the Beehive Enduro.

My name was spelled correctly—which is not always the case—and it was followed by DNF, which usually IS the case.e.

Why, I wondered, can the British follow names with a whole alphabet of letters while us poor Yankee enduro riders, are limited to DNS (Did Not Start) and DNF (Did Not Finish). Just as we can tell Mountbatten's war record by his abbreviations, we should be able to know the enduro rider's recent exploits. These will have to be approved by the venerable Sir Hugh Fleming, DAC-AMA (Director of Amateur Competition- American Motorcyclist Association) but I think we have a need for a lot more besides DNS and DNF.

For instance:

**DNS/SUS:** a competitor who rented a motel room before an enduro so he'll get a good night's rest then ran into his old girl friend who was recently divorced, and we haven't seen him since. Did Not Start/Shacked Up Successfully.

**DNS/CFS:** this is a fellow who rode the event many times but wasn't aware that they; after many years, MOVED to another town to avoid paying for a parade permit. Did Not Start/Couldn't Find Start.

**DNS/VNR:** This rider spent all day Saturday working on his motorcycle with considerable help from his younger brother. He foolishly let the kid use his van that evening. Did Not Start/ Van Not Returned.

**DNS/BCR:** a rider who spent Saturday wallpapering the bathroom because his wife and three daughters took so many hot showers they were removing the stuff almost faster than he could put it up. He drank eight glasses of iced tea while wallpapering, then relaxed that night with a six pack of cheap beer and two bowls of left-over cabbage soup. He arrived at the enduro early and headed toward the Port-A-Johns as soon as he arrived and did not emerge the rest of the day. Did Not Start/Bad Case of the Runs.

**DNS/FEE:** a sad case and increasingly common among high pressure types who believe relaxation is a dirty word. This fellow has a secretary who buys his anniversary gifts, mails out his enduro pre-entry payments and every Friday reminds him he doesn't have to come to work tomorrow.

This guy wants so much to climb the corporate ladder he wears steel insoles in his shoes; just in case. His secretary couldn't reach him on his pager because she didn't remind him to charge the thing and the battery was dead. Did Not Start/Forgot the Event Entirely.

**DMS/WHI:** this type is seasonal, usually found in November and December depending on weather conditions. If it has been raining steadily so that the fallen leaves are wet enough to be walked on silently this enduro rider, especially in rural sections, will take one look in the family freezer and, while he enjoys enduro riding tremendously, he Did Not Start/Went Hunting Instead.

That covers the DNS portion and I hope Fleming approves of them.

The DNF series is longer, I've used hundreds of excuses myself but we'll try to limit them to prevent outright lies.

**DNF/GBR:** in the days when riders wore leather helmets; called Lindbergh hats, this was a serious reason for a DNF. It happens when a rider ducks his head under a low branch then looks up again to see the next low branch coming at him at 24 miles an hour one inch above and three inches ahead of his helmet visor. The impact can make you wish you were five feet four instead of five feet ten. Did Not Finish/Got Bell Rung.

**DNF/FOA:** this is another one that's becoming less serious these days, since more people are out of work and available to help with enduros. The one-man-did-it-all enduros were nice, except for one thing: the guy rarely took down his old arrows! Woe betide the rider who missed a turn arrow and spent the next 23.7 miles Following Old Arrows.

**DNF/PCL:** enduros, by their very nature, are run in sparsely populated places with roads that are known only to the United States Postal Service, bootleggers, and the local Avon lady. It's much appreciated that maps of the area are often supplied by a

sponsoring enduro club, it's also appreciated that the dummies who draw these maps never realize that the rest of the world's mapmakers have, for some time now, kept North at the TOP of the map. Pit Crew Lost is no joke to the contestant out of fuel.

**DNF/CRT:** a 'C' designation is the mark of a poorly conditioned rider. CRT is the infamous Cramp Right Thigh which is only slightly less serious than having the shift sector blown a half inch into the side of your boot. Like death, a nice cramp is nature's warning that you're overdoing something. There is no need to list the rest of the "C" non-finishers but some of the more popular are: CLF: Cramp Left Forearm and the wonderful CUT, or Cramp Under Tongue.

**DNF/FMA:** this was once a frustrating DNF and the cause of much serious alcoholism among serious competitors. It was a definite cause of wife beating and, among women enduro riders, at least a dozen cases of husband beating. Sociologists have teamed with electrical engineers in almost eliminating this threat and Fried Motoplat Again is now rare.

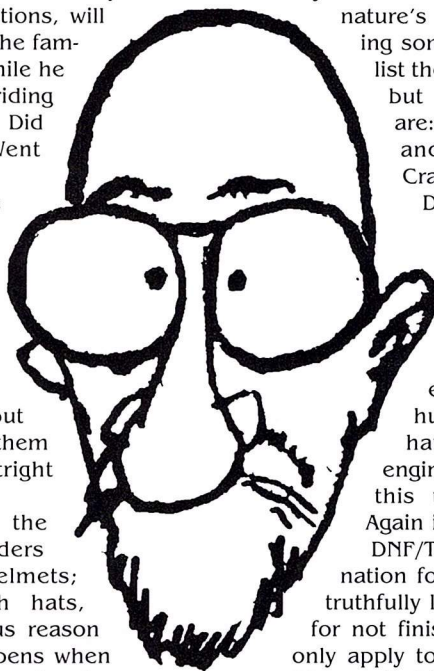
**DNF/TNM:** this is a blanket designation for riders like myself who can truthfully list ALL the previous reasons for not finishing plus a few that would only apply to a dedicated klutz, such as FOB: Fell Off Bridge; SOP: Slipped Off Pallets and OLT: Overshot Levee Turn, a serious mistake when the cranberry bogs are flooded.

I called Fleming at AMA headquarters on Monday and was told he wouldn't be in his office that day.

Maybe he was suffering from too much to eat and drink over the weekend, and still suffering from BCR and couldn't get out of his bathroom.

Or, maybe he got lucky and was still SUS.

— Ed Hertfelder



*Ed Hertfelder is a teller of tales and writer of books, as well as author of the internationally famous Duct Tapes stories. He can be reached at 111 North Summit Dr, RR5, Cabot AR 72023.*





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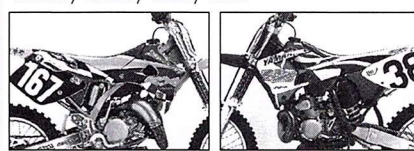
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